



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Wednesday 14 February 2024**

**Finalists announced for the PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival  
National Designer Award 2024 presented by David Jones**

PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival, Australia's largest consumer fashion event, is honoured to recognise the creativity and excellence of Australian fashion designers in their first five years of business through its prestigious annual National Designer Award presented by David Jones.

Now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year, the Award's 2024 finalists have been selected by a panel of esteemed industry leaders and include **Alix Higgins, Ikuntji Artists, Haulier, Iordanes Spyridon Gogos, Clea** and **THDR**.

Past winners reinforce the incredible calibre of the Award and include some of the most exciting names in Australian fashion such as Dylan Best (2023), ALÈMAIS (2022), COMMAS (2021), ESSE (2020), Christian Kimber (2019), P.E Nation (2018), STRATEAS.CARLUCCI (2014), Christopher Esber (2012), Dion Lee (2010), Romance Was Born (2009) and Toni Maticevski (2002).

**Caroline Ralphsmith, CEO of PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival** said the National Designer Award presented by David Jones was initiated for the sole purpose of supporting the future of fashion. "The National Designer Award presented by David Jones is the pinnacle of our Industry Development Programme, which was created to support and grow emerging local talent on a national and international stage. We are thrilled by the calibre of creativity, design quality and business acumen of this year's finalists and look forward to watching the trajectory of their brands for many years to come".

The judging criteria for the Award requires the six finalists to demonstrate vision and cohesion in creativity and design; adherence to high quality manufacturing standards; high attention to detail; strong business acumen; and a genuine commitment to addressing environmental and social impact.

The winner of the 2024 National Designer Award presented by David Jones will receive a significant business development prize pack designed to assist the label's ongoing

growth, including a cash prize of \$20,000, marketing and editorial showcase, and the opportunity to showcase their collection at the iconic David Jones Bourke Street Flagship.

To highlight the Festival and David Jones' ongoing focus on sustainability, an Honourable Mention for Sustainability will also be awarded to the finalist that demonstrates a significant dedication to addressing their impact, clear in both their product and overall business ethos. The winner of this will receive a cash prize of \$10,000 and a bespoke mentorship programme led by David Jones in consideration of their sustainability and broader business goals.

Following the success of the David Jones People's Choice Award in 2023, the National Designer Award will again allow the public to vote for their favourite designer for the chance to win a David Jones gift voucher valued at \$500. Voting will go live on 14 February on the David Jones website - [www.davidjones.com/nda-voting](http://www.davidjones.com/nda-voting) - and will close on 28 February.

Now presenting the National Designer Award for the eighth consecutive year, David Jones is committed to providing a platform for emerging design talent.

**Bridget Veals, General Manager of Womenswear, Footwear and Accessories at David Jones**, said it's an honour to support the next generation of Australian designers. "David Jones has witnessed the rise of numerous acclaimed Australian designers, such as Dion Lee, COMMAS, Esse and Maticevski, be the recipients of the nation's most prestigious fashion accolades. We take great pleasure in offering support and mentorship to these talent during their early stages, ensuring the enduring success of their brands and significant impact on the Australian fashion landscape."

The 2024 judging panel comprises Australian fashion industry leaders including Caroline Ralphsmith, CEO, PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival; Bridget Veals General Manager - Womenswear, Footwear & Accessories, David Jones; Chris Wilson, General Manager - Menswear, Childrenswear and Home + AV, David Jones; Lesleigh Jermanus, Founder & Director, Alèmais; Damien Woolnough, Style Editor, The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age; Denni Francisco, Founder & Designer, Ngali; and Lucianne Tonti, Sustainable Fashion Expert, Researcher, Writer and Consultant.

On Wednesday 6 March 2024, one of the six finalists will be awarded the 2024 National Designer Award presented by David Jones, the Honourable Mention for Sustainability and the David Jones People's Choice Award.

**-ENDS-**

DAVID JONES



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**About PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival:**

PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival is Australia's largest consumer fashion event, celebrating and supporting all aspects of fashion in Melbourne and Australia. A not-for-profit, the Festival exists to support and enhance the Australian fashion industry by showcasing and amplifying the profile of Australian designers locally and globally. The festival also inspires consumers and supports fashion retail as the lifeblood of the Australian fashion industry.

PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we live, learn and work. We pay our respects to the Kulin Nation and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present and emerging.

**About David Jones:**

David Jones is Australasia's leading premium department store retailer. The iconic department store first opened its doors in 1838 with the mission to sell 'the best and most exclusive goods'. David Jones has 41 locations across Australia and New Zealand as well as davidjones.com in Australia and is the oldest continuously operating department store in the world still trading under its original name.

**THE 2024 NATIONAL DESIGNER AWARD PRESENTED BY DAVID JONES FINALISTS****Alex Higgins (Alex Higgins)**

Alix Higgins is a fashion designer from Sydney. After studying in Paris and working with Marine Serre, Alix returned to his hometown to start his label in 2021. The brand focuses on imbuing everyday pieces with magic, poetry, a love letter to the internet, and to a future commerciality. The brand is produced in Sydney, Australia, and stocked in independent boutiques worldwide. Alix Higgins was awarded 'Emerging Designer of the Year' 2023 by the Australian Fashion Laureate and is also a proud member of the Australian Fashion Council's Fashion Trademark, a group of brands producing in Australia with shared values.

**Ikuntji Artists (Ikuntji Artists)**

Ikuntji Artists is a not-for-profit, Aboriginal art centre based in the remote Aboriginal community of Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff) in the Northern Territory. Established in 1992, it is the first Indigenous art centre in the Western Desert by women and for women.

Printmaking has been an integral part of its history, focusing on the intergenerational transfer of knowledge from elders to emerging artists. It is an inclusive space, in which experimentation and innovation within local knowledge systems are fostered.

Ikuntji designs creates employment and career opportunities for all of its 45 members and has become a trademark of innovation and sustainability, inspiring makers from around the world to create bespoke wearable art.

### **Haulier (Jeremy Hershman)**

HAULIER goods are designed to live a full life and will be all the better for their experiences. Established in Sydney in 2020 and crafted in Europe to the highest standards from materials of superior quality, HAULIER makes timeless goods that endure.

Its founder, Jeremy Hershman, draws on a career designing for the world's top luxury and legacy brands. He takes cues from the glory days of travel, his dual Australian and European heritage and the lasting fashions of the past to create contemporary heirlooms using traditional manufacturing techniques.

### **Iordanes Spyridon Gogos (Jordan Gogos)**

Iordanes Spyridon Gogos is a circular brand - continually striving to produce sustainable outcomes in their design processes. The brand currently has a 'zero' waste process of reusing wastage through compression techniques, investing in specialised machinery that furthers their commitment to sustainable processes.

### **CLEA (Natasha Gordon)**

Founded in 2021 by designer Natasha Gordon, Clea is a premium womenswear label, based in Melbourne. Distinguished by an appreciation for exceptional quality, cut and finish, classic silhouettes and wardrobe staples are reimagined with a modern approach. Embracing an aesthetic which proposes a fresh balance of opposing elements - masculine and feminine, textural and clean, strength and softness, intricate and minimal.

With meticulous attention to detail and carefully considered creation, each garment is designed with enduring elements and longevity at its core.

### **THDR (Timothy Aquino)**

THEODORE is an Australian menswear brand that utilises artificial intelligence and emerging technology to redefine the fashion landscape. Its mission is to revolutionise consumer interactions with fashion by utilising a personalised made-to-measure model that transcends standardised sizing and increases sustainability. At the heart of its revolution is the Pocket Tailor App, integrating AI (Artificial Intelligence) to ensure the perfect fit, complemented by 'WaveWear' NFC tags that bridge the physical and digital realms. THEODORE has disrupted and redefined luxury designer menswear in Australia inviting you to explore a new era where technology meets timeless style in every tailored piece.

