

**ADL  
FASHION  
WEEK**

**Expression of Interest  
RUNWAY SELECTION CRITERIA  
2026**

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# Welcome to ADL Fashion Week Runways 2026

ADL Fashion Week exists to celebrate, elevate, and connect South Australian fashion.

As the state's premier fashion platform, the program showcases the creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit that define our local industry while creating opportunities for designers and brands to engage new audiences, strengthen commercial outcomes, and contribute to Adelaide's growing reputation as a city of culture, creativity, and design.

The runway program forms the centrepiece of ADL Fashion Week. More than a showcase of garments, each runway presents a carefully curated story that reflects the diversity, ambition, and future direction of South Australian fashion.

To ensure a fair, transparent, and industry-led selection process, participation in the 2026 runway program is determined through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process facilitated by the *South Australian Fashion Industry Association* (SAFIA).

Applications are assessed by an independent industry panel against a set of published criteria specific to each runway category. These criteria have been developed to recognise a range of factors including creative excellence, market readiness, brand maturity, audience appeal, and the overall contribution a designer or business can make to the success of the festival.

While individual merit is an important component of assessment, Fashion Week is ultimately a curated program. The selection panel will also consider how applicants contribute to the overall balance, diversity, narrative, and audience experience of each runway.

We encourage all applicants to carefully review the eligibility requirements and selection criteria contained within this booklet before submitting their application.

We look forward to discovering the designers, brands, and creative businesses that will help shape ADL Fashion Week 2026.

**Dr Nathan James Crane**

Board Chair

South Australian Fashion Industry Association (SAFIA)

# CREATIVE DIRECTION

## Chris Kontos

ADL Fashion Week 2026 runways are led by Creative Director **Chris Kontos**, one of Australia's most recognised fashion and creative industry leaders.

With more than two decades of experience spanning design, marketing, public relations, retail, manufacturing, and business strategy, Chris brings a unique understanding of both the creative and commercial dimensions of the fashion industry. His career has been defined by an ability to build brands, shape cultural moments, and champion South Australian talent on national and international stages.

A graduate of TAFE SA, Chris has worked across some of Australia's most recognised fashion and lifestyle businesses. His early career included leadership roles within retail and marketing, most notably as Head of Marketing at Harris Scarfe, where he developed a passion for revitalising iconic brands and connecting them with new audiences.

He later returned to Adelaide to help establish an international fashion label, before being appointed Creative Director of the Adelaide Fashion Festival. In that role, Chris played a pivotal part in elevating the profile of South Australian fashion, increasing national and international attention through strategic engagement with media, influencers, industry leaders, sponsors, and government.

Today, through Chris Kontos Creative, he continues to advise and lead creative strategy for a diverse range of fashion, lifestyle, retail, and cultural organisations. His client portfolio has included brands and organisations such as Paolo Sebastian, Libertine perfumes, Acler, Bird in Hand, Vera Wang, Rundle Mall, the City of Adelaide, Jac + Mooki, and South Australian Style Magazine.

Known for his energy, originality, and unwavering support of local creative industries, Chris brings a deep commitment to showcasing the very best of South Australian fashion.

As Creative Director, Chris is responsible for shaping the creative vision of the ADL Fashion Week 2026 runways, ensuring the festival continues to celebrate design excellence, strengthen industry pathways, and position Adelaide as a leading destination for fashion, creativity, and culture. Upon selection Chris will work with designers to curate a runway collection that aligns with this vision.

## **THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SHOWCASE**

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>1 — Does Not Meet Expectations</b>	<b>3 — Meets Expectations</b>	<b>5 — Exceeds Expectations</b>
<b>Alignment with Runway Concept</b>	Limited or unclear understanding of the runway concept. Submission does not meaningfully engage with the narrative of Adelaide, its culture, identity, landscapes, or creative spirit.	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the runway concept, with an appropriate response that reflects Adelaide’s cultural identity and the intent of the showcase.	Demonstrates an exceptional understanding of the concept, presenting a highly considered and compelling response that captures the essence of Adelaide through fashion, storytelling, creativity, and contemporary cultural expression.
<b>Design Originality and Brand Identity</b>	Limited evidence of originality, innovation, or a distinct brand identity. Submission lacks clarity or creative differentiation.	Demonstrates a recognisable brand identity, clear creative direction, and appropriate originality in design response.	Demonstrates exceptional originality, innovation, and a highly distinctive brand identity, contributing a memorable and compelling design perspective to the runway.
<b>South Australian Authenticity and Cultural Connection</b>	Limited evidence of a meaningful connection to South Australia, Adelaide, or the broader local cultural landscape.	Demonstrates a clear connection to South Australian identity, place, or culture within the design response.	Demonstrates an exceptional and authentic connection to South Australia, offering a deeply resonant response that meaningfully reflects Adelaide’s people, culture, landscapes, or creative identity.
<b>Audience Appeal and Runway Presence</b>	Limited evidence that the collection will engage audiences or contribute meaningfully to the energy and experience of the runway presentation.	Demonstrates clear audience appeal and an appropriate contribution to the overall runway experience.	Demonstrates exceptional audience appeal and runway presence, offering a compelling, emotionally engaging, and visually memorable contribution to the opening showcase.
<b>Feasibility and Delivery Capability</b>	Limited evidence that the applicant can successfully deliver the required number of looks within expected production timelines and presentation standards.	Demonstrates a reasonable capacity to deliver the required runway presentation successfully.	Demonstrates exceptional professionalism, readiness, and production capability, with clear evidence of the ability to deliver a polished and high-quality runway presentation.

# RUNWAY REQUIREMENTS

## THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SHOWCASE

- South Australian owned and operated fashion labels only
- Maximum 18 designers
- 8 to 10 looks per designer
- Alignment with the Adelaide focused runway narrative
- Design originality and innovation
- Strong, recognisable brand identity
- South Australian authenticity and cultural connection
- Audience appeal and runway presence
- Feasibility and delivery capability

**SOLO DESIGNER RUNWAY — PREMIER COLLECTION**

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>1 — Does Not Meet Expectations</b>	<b>3 — Meets Expectations</b>	<b>5 — Exceeds Expectations</b>
<b>Alignment with Runway Concept</b>	Limited or unclear understanding of the runway concept. Submission does not meaningfully align with the vision of a flagship premier designer showcase.	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the runway concept, with an appropriate response aligned to the expectations of a major headline presentation.	Demonstrates an exceptional understanding of the concept, presenting a highly compelling response that aligns strongly with the ambition, scale, and calibre of this flagship runway.
<b>Industry Standing and Brand Recognition</b>	Limited evidence of established industry standing, market recognition, or relevance at a national or international level.	Demonstrates a credible and established industry presence, with appropriate brand recognition and professional standing.	Demonstrates exceptional industry standing, significant recognition, and a highly established reputation with clear influence within the national or international fashion landscape.
<b>Design Excellence and Collection Quality</b>	Limited evidence of design sophistication, innovation, craftsmanship, or a clearly resolved collection vision.	Demonstrates strong design capability, craftsmanship, and a coherent collection aligned with the runway brief.	Demonstrates exceptional design leadership, innovation, craftsmanship, and a highly refined collection vision that represents the pinnacle of the brand's creative output.
<b>Cultural Resonance and Audience Appeal</b>	Limited evidence that the collection will connect meaningfully with audiences or contribute to the broader cultural experience of the runway. Presentation lacks distinctiveness, emotional engagement, or public appeal.	Demonstrates clear audience appeal and a collection that contributes positively to the overall cultural experience of the runway.	Demonstrates exceptional cultural resonance and audience appeal, offering a compelling, memorable collection that engages audiences through strong aesthetic identity, emotional connection, and contemporary relevance.
<b>Feasibility and Delivery Capability</b>	Limited evidence that the applicant can successfully deliver a runway presentation of the required scale, quality, and operational complexity.	Demonstrates a reasonable capacity to deliver the required runway presentation successfully.	Demonstrates exceptional production readiness, professionalism, operational capability, and proven experience delivering high-calibre runway presentations at significant scale.

# RUNWAY REQUIREMENTS

## SOLO DESIGNER RUNWAY — PREMIER COLLECTION

- Established Australian or international designer
- Minimum 10 years in business
- Minimum 50 looks
- Proven industry recognition
- Strong brand identity
- Design excellence and collection quality
- Cultural resonance and audience appeal
- Feasibility and large scale runway delivery capability

## **THE COUTURE BALL**

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>1 — Does Not Meet Expectations</b>	<b>3 — Meets Expectations</b>	<b>5 — Exceeds Expectations</b>
<b>Alignment with Runway Concept</b>	Limited or unclear understanding of the runway concept. Submission does not meaningfully engage with couture, craftsmanship, theatricality, or the historical inspiration underpinning the showcase.	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the runway concept, with an appropriate couture response and considered engagement with the broader thematic brief.	Demonstrates an exceptional understanding of the concept, presenting a highly sophisticated response that captures couture craftsmanship, theatricality, historical reference, and contemporary reinterpretation with clarity and originality.
<b>Couture Craftsmanship and Technical Excellence</b>	Limited evidence of couture-level craftsmanship, construction quality, or technical execution. Garments do not demonstrate the level of detail expected for this runway.	Demonstrates competent craftsmanship, technical skill, and garment execution appropriate to the runway brief.	Demonstrates exceptional couture craftsmanship, technical precision, material sophistication, and outstanding garment execution reflecting the highest standards of bespoke fashion practice.
<b>Brand Identity and Creative Originality</b>	Limited evidence of a clear design language, originality, or distinctive brand identity. Submission lacks creative clarity or differentiation.	Demonstrates a recognisable brand identity, coherent creative direction, and an appropriate level of originality.	Demonstrates a highly distinctive and compelling brand identity, exceptional originality, and a refined creative vision that contributes meaningfully to the runway’s overall quality and diversity.
<b>Collaborative Craft and Multidisciplinary Integration</b>	Limited evidence of collaboration with artisans, makers, or broader craft disciplines, or little consideration of multidimensional runway storytelling.	Demonstrates some meaningful collaboration or integration of complementary craft practices that enhance the collection.	Demonstrates exceptional collaboration with artisans, jewellers, milliners, textile artists, or makers, resulting in a richly layered and multidimensional couture presentation.
<b>Feasibility and Delivery Capability</b>	Limited evidence that the applicant can successfully deliver the required number of couture looks within expected timelines, production demands, and presentation standards.	Demonstrates a reasonable capacity to deliver the required collection and meet operational expectations.	Demonstrates exceptional readiness, professionalism, production capability, and clear ability to deliver a polished couture presentation to the required standard and scale.

# RUNWAY REQUIREMENTS

## THE COUTURE BALL

- Couture focused brand operating within Australia
- Minimum 8 designers and maximum 12 designers
- 12 looks per designer
- Alignment with couture concept and historical inspiration
- Couture craftsmanship and technical excellence
- Originality, innovation, and strong brand identity
- Collaboration with local artisans, jewellers, milliners, textile artists, and makers
- Feasibility and couture level delivery capability

## **THE HOUSE RUNWAY — NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT**

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>1 — Does Not Meet Expectations</b>	<b>3 — Meets Expectations</b>	<b>5 — Exceeds Expectations</b>
<b>Alignment with Runway Concept</b>	Limited or unclear understanding of the runway concept. Submission does not meaningfully align with the vision of a cohesive, retailer-led national fashion showcase.	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the runway concept, with an appropriate response to the brief and a cohesive retail-led presentation model.	Demonstrates an exceptional understanding of the concept, presenting a highly considered and strategically aligned response that reflects a unified national retail vision with strong relevance to ADL Fashion Week.
<b>Retail Capability and Market Presence</b>	Limited evidence of national retail capability, market reach, or operational scale required to deliver the runway concept successfully.	Demonstrates a credible national presence, established retail capability, and appropriate brand recognition.	Demonstrates exceptional market leadership, significant national reach, strong consumer recognition, and proven capability to deliver a high-impact retail fashion activation.
<b>Support for Australian and South Australian Fashion Ecosystem</b>	Limited evidence of supporting Australian designers, brands, or local fashion industry participation.	Demonstrates a clear history of supporting Australian fashion, with some consideration of South Australian relevance or inclusion.	Demonstrates a strong and meaningful commitment to supporting Australian designers, with clear integration of some South Australian brands, designers, or industry contribution within the broader national retail platform.
<b>Campaign Integration and Commercial Activation Potential</b>	Limited evidence of integrated campaign capability across retail, digital, media, or customer engagement channels.	Demonstrates a competent ability to support the runway through broader campaign activity and customer-facing activation.	Demonstrates exceptional capability to deliver a fully integrated campaign across retail, digital, content, media, and customer engagement, maximising visibility and commercial impact.
<b>Feasibility and Delivery Capability</b>	Limited evidence that the applicant can deliver the runway within required production, inventory, operational, or collaboration expectations.	Demonstrates a reasonable capacity to deliver successfully within expected production and operational parameters.	Demonstrates exceptional professionalism, readiness, logistical capability, and proven ability to collaborate effectively across buying, marketing, visual merchandising, and production teams to deliver a seamless runway outcome.

# RUNWAY REQUIREMENTS

## THE HOUSE RUNWAY — NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

- Single major retail partner, department store, or national retail house
- 40 to 60 looks total
- Curated multi brand and in house label presentation
- Clear segmentation across work, weekend, event, and essentials
- Leading Australian retail house or department store
- Significant national footprint and brand recognition
- Strong record supporting Australian designers and brands
- Integrated campaign capability across retail, digital, content, and media
- Alignment with in store and online inventory

**FROM THE ARCHIVES**

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>1 — Does Not Meet Expectations</b>	<b>3 — Meets Expectations</b>	<b>5 — Exceeds Expectations</b>
<b>Alignment with Runway Concept</b>	Limited or unclear understanding of the runway concept. Submission does not meaningfully engage with circular fashion, preservation, reinterpretation, or garments as cultural artefacts.	Demonstrates a competent understanding of the runway concept, with a clear response to circular fashion, storytelling, and garment longevity.	Demonstrates an exceptional understanding of the concept, offering a highly considered and compelling response that deeply engages with circular fashion, preservation, cultural memory, and reinvention.
<b>Quality and Relevance of Garment Contribution</b>	Proposed garments lack relevance, significance, or suitability for the runway context. Limited evidence of narrative, heritage, or aesthetic contribution.	Proposed garments are relevant and suitable, with some narrative, aesthetic, or historical value.	Proposed garments are highly compelling, with clear provenance, strong aesthetic contribution, and significant narrative, archival, emotional, or cultural value.
<b>Storytelling and Public Engagement Potential</b>	Limited storytelling potential. Submission lacks narrative clarity or broader audience relevance.	Demonstrates a clear story with reasonable audience appeal and public engagement potential.	Offers an exceptional narrative with strong emotional resonance, media interest, and clear potential to engage public audiences in meaningful conversations about fashion, sustainability, and culture.
<b>Feasibility and Delivery Capability</b>	Limited evidence that the applicant can deliver within required timelines, production expectations, or operational requirements.	Demonstrates a reasonable capacity to deliver within the expected framework.	Demonstrates strong professionalism, readiness, reliability, and clear ability to deliver successfully within runway production requirements.
<b>South Australian Relevance / Ecosystem Contribution</b>	Limited or no connection to South Australian fashion, cultural history, designers, collectors, or local creative communities.	Demonstrates a clear connection to South Australian fashion, design, or cultural narratives.	Makes an exceptional contribution to preserving, celebrating, or advancing South Australia's fashion ecosystem, cultural identity, and creative legacy through a compelling local connection.

# RUNWAY REQUIREMENTS

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

- Curated showcase of archival and reimagined garments
- Blend of heritage pieces and contemporary reinterpretations
- Open to South Australian designers, brands, and collectors
- Ability to reinterpret, restore, or rework existing garments
- Strong focus on sustainability, craftsmanship, and storytelling
- Quality and relevance of garment contribution
- South Australian relevance and ecosystem contribution
- Collaboration with cultural institutions, archival access, and curation
- Styling that reflects both heritage and contemporary perspectives