



***For immediate release***

## Young Australian designers taking lead on clothing with a conscience

Young Australian designers are taking the lead in creating clothing with a conscience, meeting a growing consumer demand to know the footprint behind fashion – and it's proving profitable.

The designers are about to hit the catwalk with their ethical fashion as part of Australia's largest fair-trade and ethical festival – the Fair@Square Festival. The ethical fashion show will take place at the BMW Edge at Federation Square on December 2 in Melbourne.

Hosted by Em Rusciano, the event is the only ethical fashion show of its kind in Melbourne to showcase such a diverse range of ethical designs and accessories.

SOSUME owner and designer Alex Trimmer, whose designs will feature on the catwalk, started his eco-friendly clothing line just three years ago, and it is now stocked in more than 35 stores in Australia, London, Japan the US and New Zealand.

Trimmer says the clothing is not driven by trend and is instead simple and contemporary,

“It's very much about gorgeous fabrics and beautiful simple pieces using a minimal colour palette, created as wardrobe staples with longevity in mind.”

He says consumers are increasingly realising that you can get great clothing and do the right thing by the environment and it doesn't have an impact on the quality or the price.

If recent statistics are anything to go by, there is certainly a growing awareness and interest in fair-trade.

Research of fair-trade awareness undertaken by Mobium Group in conjunction with the Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand found sales of fair-trade related products have skyrocketed to AUD \$120 million in just five years, and more than 80% of Australians want clearer and simpler information on the benefit and impacts of eco-products.

Samantha Hardman, Australian designer of label Bento, says she's certainly had specific interest in her label because of her ethical practices.

Her brand Bento is only one year old and is already stocked across Victorian and Queensland.

“We've definitely had people buy because of the label being sustainable, and we've had stockists agree to take our clothing because of that reason.”

Hardman says sustainable practices give her an edge in the market, but fundamentally she went down this road because she believes she's doing what's right by the industry and the environment.

Alex Trimmer agrees, saying he sees little reason to conduct his business in a way that will only add to the problems of landfill and damage waterways.

“There's no real excuse because you can source the natural fabrics pretty much anywhere around the world. We source from Asia, Japan and Europe.”



He says the fabrics hold their shape, they're comfortable and have longevity because of the quality so there's incredible value from a consumer perspective.

Fair@Square director Susanna Bevilacqua says the Fair@Square fashion event demonstrates not only the future of fashion, but educates about why it's so important to move to a more ethical way of life.

"It's about not just doing what's right by the environment, but doing what's right by those who are sourcing the materials used, and ensuring people are treated fairly for the work they do, regardless of where they live.

"We are determined to create events which educate about the importance of fair-trade and ethical products and help drive industry change."

She says the Fair@Square festival provides a unique opportunity to not only celebrate those who are making a stand, but visitors to the event can purchase products from the more than 80 stallholders knowing they themselves can help make a difference.

Tickets for the ethical fashion show are on sale from October 1 – see <http://moralfairground.com.au/fairsquare.html>

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**About Fair@Square**

Fair@Square demonstrates how Australians can take action to create a sustainable future that values and respects all people and the preservation of our planet.

The festival showcases goods and services produced by a wide range of ethical producers including Oxfam, Cadbury, Lush and Adorn – to name but a few.

It offers workshops, talks, market stalls, music, fashion and art.

Still a relatively new concept, it's just three years old, and will this year expand into a three day event from December 2 – 4.

**For more information:** <http://moralfairground.com.au/fairhighlights.html>

**SOSUME:** [www.sosumeclothing.com](http://www.sosumeclothing.com)

**Bento:** [www.thisisbento.com](http://www.thisisbento.com)