

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy for Melbourne Fashion Festival Ltd.

(as at Feb 2024)

1. Introduction

At Melbourne Fashion Festival Ltd. (MFF Ltd.) we are committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment that celebrates the beauty and creativity of fashion, while respecting the uniqueness of every individual. We believe that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are fundamental human rights and essential to the success and vitality of our Festival and industry. This policy outlines our commitment to promoting diversity, ensuring equity, and fostering inclusion at every level of our organisation.

2. Statement of commitment

We are dedicated to creating and maintaining an inclusive fashion festival where all people regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, size, abilities, religion, socioeconomic background, or historically and socially marginalised identities and backgrounds, are treated with safety, dignity, inclusion, equity, equality and respect. We will actively work to eliminate barriers to inclusive and equitable participation in our Festival at all levels.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all internal and external work and relationships within MFF Ltd. including and not limited to models, designers, stylists, hair and makeup directors, partners, performers, contractors, suppliers, agencies, agency team members, volunteers, and staff. A copy of this policy will be available on our website located at www.mff.com.au.

4. Key DEI principles

4.1. Diversity

- We will actively recognise, respect and value differences based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic background, disability, size, religion and all historically and socially marginalised backgrounds, identities and groups.
- We will actively recognise, respect and value the unique differences across peoples lived experiences and identities (intersectionality).
- We will actively seek inclusive representation of historically and socially marginalised and underrepresented people and groups in all aspects of our Festival, including but not limited to participants, models, designers, stylists, hair and makeup directors, partners, performers, contractors, suppliers, agencies, agency team members, volunteers, and staff. We will do this with deep intention and genuine authenticity.
- We will actively seek to showcase fashion that respectfully represents, elevates and celebrates historically and socially marginalised people and groups.

4.2. Equity

- We will provide equal and equitable opportunities for all individuals to participate in our festival, regardless of their identity and/or background.
- We will consistently assess and seek to remove systemic barriers that may exist within our Festival, working to eliminate disparities and inequities.
- We will make reasonable accommodations to ensure accessibility for all attendees.

4.3. Inclusion

- We will create a welcoming, respectful and safe space (physical, psychological and cultural) with deep intention and genuine authenticity where everyone feels valued, seen and heard.
- We will promote open dialogue, equitable collaboration and active listening to understand the perspectives and needs of all people.
- We will not tolerate discrimination, bullying, victimisation, harassment, or exclusionary behaviour of any kind.
- We will actively seek to showcase fashion that promotes and displays respectful cultural appreciation and cross-cultural understanding.
- We will actively seek to showcase inclusive fashion design and collections.
- We will actively seek to plan, programme and produce inclusive festival experiences.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. Festival management

- Management of MFF Ltd is responsible for ensuring that DEI principles are integrated into all aspects of festival planning, programming and implementation.
- Festival management will lead by example, fostering a culture of inclusivity, safety and respect within the festival team and beyond.

5.2. Festival participants

- All Festival participants, including (and not limited to) models, designers, stylists, hair and makeup directors, partners, performers, contractors, suppliers, agencies, agency team members, volunteers, and staff, are expected to adhere to this DEI policy at all times. They should report any instances of discrimination, bullying, victimisation, harassment, or exclusion they witness or experience (See item.7. *violation, complaints, and grievances*).

6. Implementation

6.1. Workforce recruitment and development

- Through the Festival's First Nations Pathway Programme and model talent casting process, MFF will identify inclusion recruitment opportunities and seek qualified and skilled team members with a focus on historically and socially marginalised communities and intersectionality to ensure equitable and inclusive representation.
- We will collaborate with experts in the field to ensure best practices in DEI, raise awareness and enhance capability and cultural competency within the organisation.

6.2 Organisational culture

MFF Ltd. will promote an organisational culture in which all staff:

- Understand and have informed respect for cultural diversity and historical and social marginalisation based on identity/identities in all interactions between staff, participants and the wider community.

- Are responsive to the needs of staff and participants to create a welcoming, respectful and safe space (physical, psychological and cultural) with deep intention and genuine authenticity where everyone feels valued, seen and heard.
- Acknowledge staff and participants' rights, where it does not conflict with Australian law and the rights of others, to adhere to their own cultural and religious traditions without fear of discrimination or harassment.

6.3. Outreach and engagement

- We will actively engage with organisations representing culturally and linguistically diverse communities and organisations to improve cultural literacy and sensitivity and ensure inclusivity in our programming, recruitment, model casting, planning and implementation.
- We will seek feedback from participants to continually improve our festival's DEI initiatives.

6.3. Inclusive approach to model talent

- Inclusive approach to model casting for all MFF produced runways, events and campaigns in accordance with MFF event policies as published at www.mff.com.au.

6.4. Collection review process

- MFF Ltd. understands the important role it must play in balancing the rights of our designers to freely express themselves with the responsibility to respect cultural and social values and the lived experiences of the communities we serve. Open dialogue, contextualisation, and sensitivity to diverse viewpoints are vital in striking a delicate balance that fosters creativity and expression while promoting understanding and cultural appreciation, safety, respect and inclusion.
- Ensuring that all showcased collections align with MFF's values and policies is of paramount importance. The festival conducts a collection review process to review for sensitivities or breach of event policies in a two-phase approach: during look book submission and again once the physical collection has been received. Designers must adhere to strict timelines as items that have not been appropriately reviewed cannot be shown during the Festival.

7. Violation, complaints and grievances

All violations, complaints and grievances will be treated seriously, and considered actions will be taken, which may include removal from the festival and/or disciplinary action (see section 6.4). MFF will actively support and assist any person making a claim of a breach, including protection of identity.

How to report a breach, complaint or grievance:

- MFF Ltd. employees are to follow clear procedures for reporting issues as outlined in the organisations internal Grievance & Complaints Policy.
- Third parties may follow procedures outlined below or Whistleblower Policy as published on the festival website or please immediately notify the following contact/s as appropriate to the situation:
- Contact the Event Operations Centre (EOC) on 0424 690 226 / eoc@mff.com.au.
- Contact immediate Supervisor or Manager
- Contact known member of MFF staff or management, including MFF Model Liaison located backstage

8. Breach of this Policy

- Any breach of this policy by MFF employees may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment in accordance with MFF Ltd. disciplinary procedures.
- Third parties who breach this policy may be subject to other consequences at the discretion of MFF management, for example, an agency team member may be banned from the premises; a designer may be declined participation.

9. Evaluation and Improvement

This policy is a living document and will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.