



30th of August 2017

FCF Chairman's address at the TCF AGM 2017

Bula Vinaka all and greetings from the Fashion Council of Fiji,

I apologise for not being able to be there to present an update on our industry personally, however I am pleased to report that our Council and industry has experienced major shifts since I first came to speak to you as the newly elected Chairman only a short 3 years ago.

Our industry has seen the establishment of household brands in the last few years. You need to only look at the recent opening of the new Samson Lee Boutique on Butt Street, or the production facility and relatively new retail outlet for Rako and family owned business Haus of Koila, or indeed the fashion hub of Palm Court which houses PIA, Aladdin's Cave. 8mountains and RFx Boutique in Suva for an illustration of thriving small fashion businesses, on the cusp of something greater.

Indeed the ongoing success of Treehouse Boutique's production facility is testament to the strength of production needs for thriving fashion businesses, and a market that is not only interested in Fijian Made, but also, Fijian Designed.

There is a shortage of production facilities still, and this problem will only escalate as fashion businesses grow in line with demand for Fijian designer products.

Printing facilities are also lacking, with long time screen printers Wasa Ni Tadra unable to meet the demand from designers responding to the market, which is hungry for local prints. Some designers have looked at investing in their own facilities, but perhaps this is an opportunity for your members to consider.

With growth comes a need to capacity build, and APTC has been a great help in this regard, providing education up to a Certificate IV level in Applied Fashion Design, and we thank the TCF for their continued support of this programme, and look forward to the introduction of the Diploma programme in 2018. The Fashion Council is excited to announce that we will soon begin operation of a Fashion Incubator.

We have found an established location in Vatuwaqa and will soon be reaching out to all of you for support in the form of equipment. The incubator will serve to increase the ability and capacity of Fashion Designers who are in the process of establishing new businesses, or growing those in nascent stages, while also being a centre for sample production for designers, particularly around major events such as Fiji Fashion Week, Style Fiji, and Project Jejemon.

The Council would also like to reassure everyone that Fiji Fashion Week will carry on, details of this arrangement will be released through the media as soon as matters have been finalised. We look forward to welcoming you to Fiji Fashion Week 2018 in the usual month of May.

Other major developments for our Council include our partnership with ANZ through which we launched our regions first Fashion ATM programme, giving established member designers invaluable marketing exposure. Textile designs of Samson Lee, Robert Kennedy, Moira Solvalu, Ilai Jikoiono, Hupfeld Hoerder, and Epli Tuibeqa covered ATMs across ANZ's most visible locations. We are pleased to note that Samoa has now taken up Fashion ATM initiative to help promote their designers.

We have also recently partnered with the British Council to develop young creatives and designers for careers in both our industries. We only need to look at one of our most brilliant creative minds, Andrew Powell's move to Lyndhurst to illustrate that there is something for us all in the development of a thriving Fashion Industry.

We continue to be thankful to TCF, particularly Mark Halabe and Kaushik Kumar who have been champions of our industry for a long time. The Council does ask however that TCF producers work with us on the issue of intellectual property. We require your cooperation to ensure that our designers' textile work is protected in order that their businesses are also protected and allowed to grow. We did have an issue earlier in the year in relation to the alleged theft of a few designers intellectual property. Needless to say that this is unacceptable practice and takes advantage of small business, which needs to be able to trust you in order to grow.

Again, my personal sincerest thanks to you all. I look forward to addressing you all again next year, and you'll soon be receiving calls asking for support of our incubator.

Vinaka Vaka Levu and congratulations to the newly elected executive.

Faraz Ali

Fashion Council of Fiji
Chairman