

Solutions for Success

Report on Innovation in Australia

THE LAST WORD

This year's **Designedge Innovation Festival** was an overwhelming success with more than 50 inspiring events held throughout Western Australia and New South Wales. The 2009 festival was full of activity with workshops, networking forums and displays, and the annual event was apart of the WA Program for the Australian Innovation Festival.

Designedge first started in 2003 as part of the Designedge - TCF Australia Uncovered trade exhibition at Burswood Resort Complex in Perth and brought together more than 100 exhibitors and international investors, agents and buyers. Since then Designedge has morphed a number of times and excitingly now is the only virtual fashion incubator in Australia. It provides a virtual shop front for more than 30 small fashion businesses currently, and 10 feature Indigenous designers.

As a partner Festival within the Australian Innovation Festival, the 2009 Designedge Innovation Festival offered a networking forum for the WA fashion, textile, clothing, footwear, and leather industry. Events centered on starting & growing your own business, finding investors, finance, media & marketing, e-commerce, and importing & exporting.

The Festival was launched by local Indigenous Artist **Leanne Manado** and **Ben Wyatt, MLA**, and Co-Patron of the Belmont BEC who officially launched the WA Program Australian Innovation Festival, BEC Australia and Designedge Innovation Festivals.



Leanne Manado with a piece of her artwork and Victoria Park MLA Ben Wyatt who is co-patron of Belmont BEC.

Carol Hanlon Manager of Designedge Festival said, "The Designedge Innovation Festival grows in size every year, and we pleased to be able to support a huge range of people involved in the fashion and creative industries industry across Australia."

Workshops on offer included 'Five Mistakes Innovators Make and How To Avoid Them' and 'Protecting Your Intellectual Property Within the Fashion Industry', and 'Making Sales Through Your Website'. There was something for all fashion orientated businesses that attended! In addition, to highlight innovation, there was an Inventors Forum which provided an opportunity to meet inventors from all walks of life which attracted over 650 visitors to the display at Belmont Forum Shopping centre.

Innovation in Small Business forum staged in conjunction with the WA Chamber of Commerce with guest speakers from some of Australia's leading TCF industries that included Steel Blue, Stuart & Heaton Clothing Company and Haul who captivated the audience with sharing backgrounds on product innovation and business development.

Encouragement of new and innovative products and services was one of the main themes of the festival this year. The Designedge Innovation Festival also showcased indigenous artwork and new fashion designers from all parts of the globe, including design and production movements in Paris, Spain, Italy and Portugal.

Sponsors for the event this year included Belmont Business Enterprise Centre (Belmont BEC), TCF WA, Metro Small Business Centres, Australia Post, Westpac Bank, Sadleirs Transport and Watermark.