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Case Study

AFW Australian Fashion Week

PRESENTED BY Shark Beauty

Australian Fashion Week 2026



AFW, Photo by Lucas Dawson

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Introduction.

Australian Fashion Week 2026 was a celebration of Australia's authentic creative voice and design excellence, showcased to international audiences under industry stewardship.

As the peak body for the Australian fashion and textile industry, the AFC represents and advocates for its members, which span from fibre producers to designers, manufacturers, and retailers in championing innovation, sustainability, and global competitiveness.

In 2025, ownership of Australian Fashion Week fell to the AFC, and the council took on the task of demonstrating how stakeholder investment in the event could translate to tangible, economic outcomes for the industry.

Results at a Glance

4700+
Australian Media Mentions in May 2026

1100+
International Media Mentions Across May 2026

365m+
Total AFW International Audience Reach in May 2026



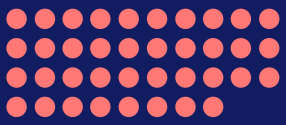
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Number of Designers

38



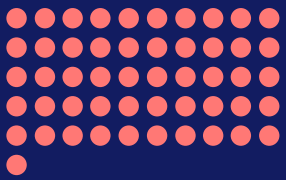
Number of Runways

31



Number of Events

51



Background.

Under the leadership of the Australian Fashion Council, AFW shifted from traditional event spaces for the very first time to the Museum of Contemporary Art, framed by the Harbour Bridge and Opera House. This iconic backdrop symbolised a turning point for the AFW series that put Sydney at the heart of the narrative, reimagining a globally recognised Fashion Week for local brands and designers.

> When you're managing a five-day event with dozens of moving parts and multiple audiences, you can't know what's actually being said about you without a system that's monitoring continuously. Streem gives you that visibility. It lets you spot emerging issues, capitalise on positive momentum, and brief stakeholders with facts rather than impressions.
>
> Prue-Ellen Thomas,
> Head of Marketing & Communications

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Challenges & Objectives.

The AFC was facing an exponentially more complex communications environment than their day-to-day work.

Tracking simultaneous narratives across multiple audiences

AFC had to monitor trade media, consumer fashion media, business and economics press, government stakeholders, international reporters, and their own member base.

Realtime reputation management

A live five-day event with 38 designers, 31 runways, 51 events, and thousands of moving parts created enormous opportunity for off-message storytelling.

International positioning

Every headline mattered when trying to attract international buyers and press to Australia in the middle of winter. A poorly framed story could undercut months of relationship-building.

Balancing accessibility with exclusivity

AFW is invitation-only for industry, but they've opened significant consumer pathways (Fashion Pass, public talks, livestreams, street style coverage). Media needed to understand this nuance and communicate it accurately.

Their PR and communications goals were three-fold:

1. **Position AFW 2026 as a turning point for the industry under AFC leadership**

"This was about demonstrating that the shift to industry ownership and governance translates to tangible outcomes: a programme that reflects our members' capabilities, scale, and global ambitions."

2. **Showcase Australia's authentic creative voice and design excellence to international audiences**

"We had secured significant buyer attendance from priority markets including the United States, United Kingdom, Europe and the Middle East, and we needed to ensure our messaging amplified this as a genuine trade opportunity, not just a cultural celebration."

3. **Communicate the broader industry narrative around sovereignty and economic contribution**

"AFW sits within a larger strategic context: the National Manufacturing Strategy we launched in March, our work through the Accessing New Markets Initiative, and our commitment to First Nations designers and design leadership. We needed media coverage that reflected this depth, not just the runway spectacle."

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The Approach.

Thousands of moving parts meant navigating narrative control and context loss.

They needed to know in realtime:

What are the dominant themes?

What's the volume of coverage?

Are we losing control of key narratives?

Are international media picking up the trade story, or just the aesthetics?

With Streem, AFC could:

PRE-EVENT

Monitor coverage across fashion, trade, business and cultural media as stories broke across both traditional outlets and digital platforms during the five-day event window.

Track narrative themes and storylines across publications to find dominant messaging and catch coverage that was going off-message, identifying opportunities for rapid response or gaps requiring outreach.

Provide daily briefings to leadership on coverage spikes, top sources, and sentiment to give the team alignment on how AFW was being perceived externally.

POST-EVENT

Conduct a comprehensive coverage audit across the full five days to build an accurate picture of total media mentions, reach, and sentiment across all outlets.

Identify which designers and storylines generated the most coverage and which received less attention, revealing gaps or opportunities for future editions.

Determine whether the trade narrative they'd built was landing with the press in key markets overseas through realtime context on international perception.

Build the case for stakeholder impact by demonstrating significant media outcomes from AFW 2026 to government partners, sponsors, and the board.

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4700+

AFW Australian Mentions in May 2026

1400+

Australian Designer Mentions During the Five-Day Event

501m+

Total Australian Audience Reach from March 1 to June 1 2026

The Results.

In just five days, AFC Australian Fashion Week achieved national and international penetration across mainstream, fashion, trade, business, and cultural outlets.

The event earned 3600+ Australian mentions across Print, Online, TV, Radio, Magazine, and Podcast media during the event week alone, with a Total Audience Reach of more than 501 million between March 1st and June 1st. From May 11th to 15th, the featured designers also earned a combined total of 1400+ mentions in Australian media.

Not only did AFW earn momentous coverage volume, there was also complexity and substance within this coverage. Outlets spoke on design excellence, craft, First Nations cultural contribution, trade outcomes, and the industry's broader strategic positioning around manufacturing and sovereign capability.

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The Results.



Coverage Volume & Potential Audience Reach Timeline

Coverage peaked above 1,400 items on May 11th, the first day of Australian Fashion Week.

Having a platform that showed AFC the conversation's trajectory in realtime meant that when a story gained momentum, they could respond appropriately. When coverage was thin in a key area, AFC could prompt additional outreach.

Streem Data: Australian Print, Online, TV, Radio, Magazine & Podcast media mentions with syndications, May 1 to 31, 2026

AI Visibility: Top Cited Domains

TRAJAAN

AFW Site · **20%** | ELLE · **8%** | RUSSH · **7%** | AFC Site · **5%**

Marie Claire · **5%** | The Guardian · **5%** | Vogue · **4%** | Womens Weekly · **4%**

Post-event, AI Visibility data from Streem and Trajaan identified the articles and outlets influencing how ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity and Grok answered questions about Australian Fashion Week. The LLM answers analysed in July 2026 contained 260 source citations, with official AFW and AFC domains accounting for 25%. AFC's owned channels therefore played a significant role in establishing core event information, while earned media shaped designer discovery, trend framing and show-level judgement. Among third-party media, consumer fashion and lifestyle outlets generated almost five times as many citations as business and trade publications, showing that LLMs relied far more heavily on consumer-facing coverage when answering questions about AFW. Behind the AFW website, Elle and RUSSH were the two most-referenced sources for prompts including "What were fashion editors saying about Australian Fashion Week?" and "Who had the best runway show at Australian Fashion Week?" The Guardian expanded the source mix into mainstream news, giving LLMs a broader perspective on AFW and its designers. Together, these insights give AFC a practical view of which outlets and content continue to inform AI answers after the event, creating opportunities to build on influential media relationships and develop owned content around the questions audiences are asking AI.

Streem & Trajaan Data: Leading Domain Citations 1-31 July.

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Lasting Impact.

Australian Fashion Week 2026 made headlines that mattered for the industry, both at home and overseas.

International media AFW reached approximately 56% of New York Fashion Week's prior-season volume (8450 mentions) and 59% of Paris Fashion Week's equivalent period (7951 mentions), an exceptional achievement against the relative scale of Australia's fashion industry compared to the established markets of the USA and Europe.

Over the span of three months fom March 1 to June 1, AFW earned 1466 mentions in international media. Coverage on buyer attendance, commercial pathways and export opportunities positioned AFW as a strategic communication platform for industry development.

In Australia, AFW's 2026 designers were mentioned over 9000 times in May 2026. Using Streem, AFC was able to communicate ROI for participation, particularly important for SMEs considering investment in future events.

At Streem, we loved being able to support the team behind this iconic Sydney event, and it was a privilege to provide the realtime media insights they needed to keep their momentum.

> "AFW is now a cornerstone of our industry development strategy. Every year, the event needs to deliver more sophisticated outcomes: more international engagement, more trade conversion, more integrated storytelling around manufacturing and sovereignty. Streem lets us measure and optimise that."

Prue-Ellen Thomas,
Head of Marketing & Communications

365+
Total AFW International Audience Reach for May 2026

56%
Of New York Fashion Week's Prior-Season Media Mention Volume Achieved in May 2026 by AFW

59%
Of Media Mention Volume from Paris Fashion Week's Equivalent Period Achieved in May 2026 by AFW

1100+
International Media Mentions in May 2026

VOGUE The New York Times
Daily Mail Stuff
GQ GRAZIA 10L

Streem Data: International Print, Online, TV, Radio, Magazine & Podcast mentions with syndications

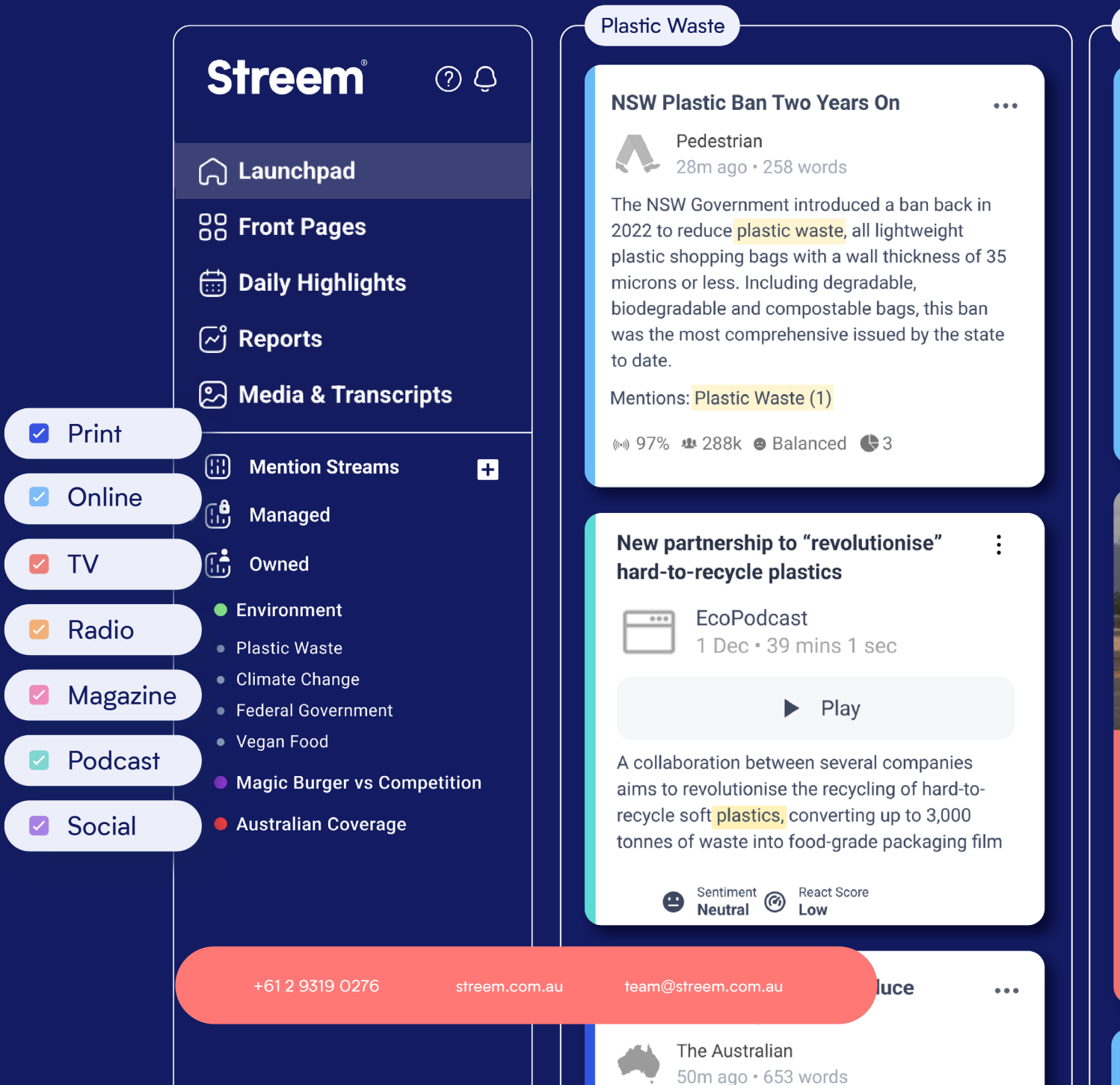
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