



CIRCULAR DESIGN INNOVATION AWARD 2025

At Mindful Fashion our mission is to create an innovative, full-circle and thriving future for New Zealand's fashion and textiles industry.

In a circular economy, waste and pollution are designed out, products and materials are circulated and nature is regenerated. This means transforming the way products are designed, made, sold and used so they circulate, ensuring valuable resources are kept in use and out of landfill.

At its core, the circular economy is about the interconnectedness of people and the natural world, linked by spirals of continuous renewal and regeneration. This holistic way of thinking is intrinsic to indigenous knowledge and has long been found in the Māori and Pasifika cultures of Aotearoa and the Pacific Islands.

How might we redesign materials, products, services and business models so there is no waste? What could a more circular and regenerative place-based system for fashion look like in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Designers, innovators and creatives are at the forefront of change. The Award recognises the pivotal role of design in transforming systems to be low carbon and circular, and aims to inspire new ways of working and creating value for fashion and textiles.

Based on the guiding principles of people, place and nature, the Award empowers entrants to explore the principles of the circular economy from a scientific and an indigenous lens. Weaving principles of mātauranga Māori and indigenous wisdom with industry knowledge, skills and resources, the programme inspires entrants to explore creative ways to design out waste. This Award is place-based, challenging entrants to create a circular solution that tackles a local or regional textile waste stream.

We are looking for innovative designers to reimagine fashion in Aotearoa as circular, using the dual lens of our unique place in the world and the circular economy to find innovative ways to keep textiles in use.

The Challenge

Design a circular solution for fashion in Aotearoa NZ.

Design and make a circular outfit or accessory using textile waste. Identify a textile waste stream, and redesign this material/s to create an innovative and wearable outfit or accessory, using circular design principles that embed lifecycle thinking into your creation.

- Open to individuals and collectives currently residing in New Zealand.



Circular Design Innovation Categories	Award	Prize Pack
1. CLOTHING DESIGN INNOVATION Create an <u>outfit</u> using waste textiles	Circular Clothing Innovation Award	\$7,000 prize pack
2. ACCESSORY DESIGN INNOVATION Create an <u>accessory</u> using waste textiles	Circular Accessory Innovation Award	\$5,500 prize pack
Special Prizes *Awarded at Judges discretion. **All entries eligible for these additional awards unless stated otherwise. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising Talent Award • Cotton Innovation Award* see Textile Waste section for requirements • Commercial Potential Award 		\$4,500 prize pack
Finalists (up to 10)		\$3,000 prize pack

Entry Process		Date
Stage 1 Enter the Award	Apply to enter the Awards by submitting an Entry form and paying your entry fee by the closing date. Entries close.	Tuesday 27th May - Sunday 29th June
Stage 2 Learn	Participate in our workshops and access online content to learn and experiment with designing for a circular economy.	During July
Create your Entry	Create your finished outfit or accessory. Final submissions due. Send your finished entry to Mindful Fashion to be assessed by our panel of expert judges.	July - August Friday 12th September
Stage 3 Judging	Finalists and Award winners selected. Finalists will be notified.	15-21st September 22nd September
Stage 4 Award Gala	Circular Design Award gala event in Auckland. Finalists are exhibited and Award winners announced.	Tuesday 7th October



Requirements

- Identify a textile waste stream, and transform this material/s.
- Create an accessory or wearable outfit with end of life in mind.

Stage 1 Apply to Enter.

1. Complete the Entry Form and pay your Entry Fee - online or by bank transfer.

Stage 2 Create your Finished Entry and send to us. It must include:

1. Your finished outfit or accessory (named).
2. A Digital PDF (maximum 2 A4 pages in total, no more than 5 MB) including:
 - a. A concept statement, outlining your concept in 1-2 sentences.
 - b. A little about yourself (50 words MAX)
 - c. Where you would position your concept contextually in the market (30 words)
 - d. A written statement (300 words MAX), identifying the waste stream used and volume of waste available, techniques used, how you've incorporated the circular design strategies, and a plan for your entry's life cycle and end of life.
 - e. 1-3 photos MAX showing how your outfit is worn on a mannequin or body.

Finished Entry

The finished outfit/accessory needs to be wearable/usable, with tidy construction, and the overall design aesthetic appealing and desirable for its intended market. The circular life cycle of the outfit/accessory should be carefully outlined for the judging panel.

Judging Criteria

The panel of expert judges will be looking for entries that have strong visual appeal, show innovative use of waste material and consideration of place, with the full life cycle of the outfit/accessory and its impact on the environment considered, including what will happen to it after the Award.

The judges will be looking at entries across four key criteria:

Criteria	Description	Weighting
Materials and Innovation	<p>Identification of a viable waste stream, with resulting outfit/accessory made from at least 80% textile waste, sourced within Aotearoa.</p> <p>Entry shows creativity and innovation in its approach to reimagining and reworking textile waste to create finished outfit/accessory.</p>	20



Creativity and Innovation	The judges are looking for an entry with the Wow! factor. The originality and creativity of the work results in a resolved design with commercial potential. The outfit/accessory is wearable/usable, with a design aesthetic that is appealing for the intended market.	20
Connection to Place	Demonstrate consideration of place in the development of the entry, by drawing on materials, skills, and knowledge from local/regional networks, creating benefit in the region where possible.	20
Circular Impact	<p>The full life cycle of the entry and its impact on the environment is considered, to ensure no further waste is created in the future. Coherent decisions on design, material selection, techniques and processes are utilised showing a deep understanding of circular design through 4 strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design for Low-impact Materials and Processes 2. Design for Longevity 3. Design for Recyclability 4. Design for Low Waste 	40

KEY TERMS

Circular

Entrants are challenged to embed circular design principles and holistic life-cycle thinking into their creation, considering the fashion system that their creation moves in, and its role as a product or service. As part of the design process, entrants should consider the plan for the full life-cycle of their creation, from cradle to cradle, considering their obligations and responsibilities as a good ancestor to ensure they do not create further waste or pollution problems in the future.

Textile Waste

Pre- or post-consumer textile waste from across the value chain; textile swatches; cut-and-sew textile waste; damaged or faulty textiles; damaged or faulty clothing or textile products; end-of-life, unwearable or un-sellable clothing; unusable textile products; and proprietary clothing or textile products that are no longer able to be worn.

Cotton - to be considered for the Cotton Innovation award outfits must be made from 100% cotton material (at least 80% of which is waste), with the source clearly identified for judges.

All waste must be sourced from within Aotearoa New Zealand.



FAQs

1. Any confidential information provided to Mindful Fashion will be treated as such and only provided to the judging panel if required.
2. Circular Design Innovation Award entries:
 - a. must be made from at least 80% waste textiles, sourced within Aotearoa, and from a local or regional waste stream where possible. Documented evidence of textile waste is required as part of supporting documentation;
 - b. can be submitted by a collective or an individual. There is no limit to the number of people within a collective. Entries from collectives must name all members of the collective on the final submission form. Collectives that reach the finalist stage of the Award are responsible for managing the distribution of the prize pack themselves;
 - c. Garments shown at university graduation shows are allowed to be entered in the Circular Design Innovation Award. Any garment that has been entered and placed in the top three in any other competition is ineligible to enter;
 - d. Garments and accessories that are made under licence or that are currently produced by a commercial label in New Zealand are not eligible to be entered into the Circular Design Innovation Award;
 - e. Garments or accessories entered into this award cannot subsequently be commercially manufactured or sold without the written agreement of the Award organisers;
 - f. Each Finished Entry must be received by 5pm on the end closing date, and accompanied by a completed Entry Form and all other submission requirements, in order to be considered.
3. Circular Business Innovation entries will be accepted from any business in the clothing and textile industry that operates and is registered in New Zealand. Members of Mindful Fashion are encouraged to enter.
4. Individuals or collectives who are employed by Mindful Fashion member businesses are encouraged to enter, but it is not a requirement.
5. Mindful Fashion staff cannot enter.
6. Individuals who are employed by Mindful Fashion Board member companies, sponsors or partners of this Award can enter, as long as they are doing so in their own capacity and this is declared in their entry form.
7. Prizes are not transferable for cash. Where a collective entry wins a prize, the collective must decide how they would like to manage the distribution of prizes within their collective. For any queries email: circulardesignaward@mindfulfashion.co.nz