

# CAREER CHAT: ANDIE HALAS, THREAD TOGETHER



ANDIE HALAS IS ON A MISSION TO ADDRESS FASHION WASTAGE AND HELP THOSE LESS FORTUNATE AT THE SAME TIME.



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The idea for Thread Together first came to Andie Halas when she was a shareholder in the iconic Australian swimwear brand Seafolly. The organisation is now a fully fledged national operation that empowers and restores dignity by providing those in need with a choice of new clothing at no cost. Halas chats to *JONES* about the moment she discovered her new purpose and how her career path has shaped the role she inhabits today.

*Are you able to pinpoint a specific moment that motivated you to address the issue of fashion excess and waste?*

The catalyst for my transition from Seafolly to the realm of Thread Together emerged from an unexpected encounter with surplus beach towels – the result of a manufacturing glitch. The decision to donate them to a local charity unveiled a stark reality. As I observed a mother and her daughter sifting through worn-out clothing at the centre, the stark contrast between their plight and the abundance of unsold new clothing in the fashion industry struck a chord. This became the seed for Thread Together, an organisation dedicated to redirecting unsold clothing from the brink of landfill to those in need. Our mission extends beyond salvaging garments; it resonates with a deeper ethos of compassion and environmental responsibility. The thread of empathy weaves through every aspect of our work – a quiet force driving positive change.

*Has your work at Thread Together changed the way you approach fashion on a personal level?*

Thread Together's core belief in the transformative power of clothing to restore dignity and empower individuals to reach their full potential has left a profound and enduring impact on my relationship with fashion. While my love for and enjoyment of fashion remain, there's a heightened consciousness in my fashion decisions. My wardrobe has transformed into a considered collection, where every item serves a purpose, receives ample use and aligns with my commitment to mindful consumption. Circular thinking has become paramount, leading me to opt for fewer but high-quality items that I diligently repair and maintain to extend their lifespan. Embracing the ethos of reuse and repurpose has become a significant aspect of my personal commitment to keeping clothes out of landfill. Perfection is elusive, but I firmly believe that small changes, collectively embraced, can yield a significant impact.

*As you reflect on the journey of building Thread Together, is there a moment or achievement that stands out as particularly memorable for you personally?*

Amid the vast array of experiences with Thread Together, one story lingers. A remarkable lady from Adelaide – a survivor of domestic violence with five children – entered our clothing hub fragile and fearful. Our mobile wardrobes and clothing hubs, staffed by compassionate individuals, are designed to empower our clients. Every person, no matter the challenges they face, deserves



*Andie Halas is helping to empower people through fashion.*

## SUPPORT FASHION CIRCULARITY AT DAVID JONES

David Jones is proud to continually support Thread Together by donating new, high-quality clothing to the organisation. You can also embrace the circular fashion movement and elevate your wardrobe staples by shopping for coveted pre-loved luxury pieces from Blue Spinach, Australia's premium luxury fashion reseller, which is available both online and at the David Jones Elizabeth Street store.

the best, not the remnants. Over the course of six years, I witnessed her resilience, her journey of rebuilding a life from the ground up. Today, she stands as an Aboriginal health worker, ordering clothes from Thread Together for her clients. Her story embodies strength, inspiration and the transformative power of resilience. She's not just a beneficiary; she's a friend with a wicked sense of humour, reminding me that the threads of connection we weave extend far beyond clothing.

*Looking to the future, what do you hope to achieve through Thread Together?*

Our mission remains unwavering: to be a recognised ethical solution to address

fashion excess. We will continue to strengthen our role as a significant force redirecting new clothing from landfill into the hands of those in need. Thread Together envisions a landscape where we become a central hub for comprehensive solutions within the fashion industry. Beyond salvaging garments, we aspire to be a nexus for collaboration among stakeholders, working together to devise sustainable and circular strategies for effectively managing the challenges posed by fashion excess and end-of-life products. Thread Together is ready to support the industry into a brighter, more responsible tomorrow, where clothing is not just a commodity but a symbol of dignity, accessibility and sustainable choices for all Australians.