



MINDFUL FASHION
NEW ZEALAND

SUSTAINABILITY INSIGHTS 2021

Case Studies

First sustainability baseline of the NZ fashion and textiles industry

Going beyond carbon credits - How Juliette Hogan targets their emissions.

In 2021 Juliette Hogan joined the Toitu Carbon Assess Program, completing baseline assessments for both 2019 and 2020. They gathered data across the year relating to fuel, electricity, travel, waste and freight and then calculated the amount of Carbon per \$1000 revenue for the business.

With the lockdowns in 2020 the brand found it no surprise to see a 41 % reduction in emissions, especially with the absence of international travel. Travel was its biggest carbon emitting activity in 2019, contributing to 45 % of emissions (vs 27 % in 2020). The only area where it did see an increase in was freight which it attributed largely to significant increase in online deliveries as a result of the lockdowns.

Because of Covid-19's impacts on the business and subsequent carbon footprint, it has been difficult to get an accurate picture of the businesses baseline for future targets. Regardless, Juliette Hogan is still looking at ways it can contribute to the Government's recent pledge of 50 % reduction in emissions by 2030 with several initiatives currently being finalised as part of its 2022 Sustainability Strategy. While there is a temptation to purchase carbon credits to become net-zero, it is committed to investigating and implementing policies and procedures that reduce the impacts its business operations have on the planet.

The business is working to reduce emissions by:

- Developing a comprehensive garment and fabric care guide to support its customers extending the life of their JH garments
- Giving better visibility to its existing repair program
- Review and alignment with service providers that have a focus on emissions reduction
- Investigating different options around low emission or carbon offsetting for online deliveries
- Weekly compost collection at its head office through We Compost
- Donation of scrap fabric to community projects to divert these scraps from landfill
- Committed to replacing dead halogen bulbs in HO with LED bulbs to reduce power usage
- With the potential return of international travel soon, it is looking to introduce a travel policy
- Use sea freight wherever possible for inbound raw materials

Read more about Juliette Hogans work [here](#).

“Carbon credits aren't the magic bullet for reducing emissions, instead a systems view approach is required by businesses to see impactful changes”

Tui Moore, Sustainability Program Manager, Juliette Hogan



An holistic approach - The Untouched World philosophy

Untouched World is a sustainable lifestyle brand that celebrates living in harmony with nature. It believes in quality over quantity and doing right by people and the planet. The brand is certified B Corp, awarded to businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose.

The entire Untouched World philosophy is reflected in its logo, a symbol representing the Manu Tukutuku Māori kite, the emblem being seen as an ideal relationship between humans and nature. The logo is on every garment and serves to bring, and keep, the spirit of Manu Tukutuku front of mind for all stakeholders of this brand.

Kaitiakitanga, the deep kinship between humans and the natural world, is an integral part of Untouched World's values. With the view that all life is connected, Untouched World sees it as their job to be nature's guardians. As a business, this means considering every decision it makes with intention and respect towards people and the planet, from the Untouched World Foundation work to the selection of its fibres and the full lifecycle of products.

It begins by selecting fibres and fabrics that are easy on the earth from seed to decomposition, then designs each piece for maximal use and for minimal waste. By integrating the values of Kaitiakitanga into fibre selection, Untouched World is conscious of ensuring fibres are not only natural but are sourced ethically and sustainably leaving a small environmental footprint and a large social impact.

Untouched World merino is ZQ™ certified, meaning it is grown to high standards of environmental, social, and animal welfare. Their merino growers are part of ZQRX™, which is a regenerative approach to farming, built on the belief that we must give more than we take to leave the world in a better place than how we found it.

Kaitiakitanga is also integrated in the Untouched World Foundation which was established in 2000, and their work includes the Blumine Island Biodiversity programme which focuses on maintaining a predator-free island sanctuary for native flora and fauna.

Read more about Untouched Worlds philosophy [here](#).

“At Untouched World we are working hard to design the business to place emphasis on an approach that seeks to holistically leave things in a better way. For us, this is a journey - we will never say ‘we’ve done it’”

Peri Drysdale, Founder and CEO, Untouched World





Cirkel Life - Clothing that works for the Next Generation

Around 5 years ago, whilst working as a patternmaker for a local NZ brand, Karlie Morrow started to really notice the amount of waste generated by both the sampling processes and the off cuts from local manufacturing, not to mention unsold garments that could sit in their storeroom for years and years.

Over the years and with more insight into the fabric/textile waste problem the world is facing an idea emerged to create a children's wear label for the tween/teen age group using this waste. Recycled denim collected from op shops, upcycled sheets and linen, off cuts from local fashion labels and sampling fabrics either bought or supplied by other local labels. Karlie's goal was originally to 'save it all' from landfill but issues with (aside from sheer quantity) fabric quality and hygienic concerns meant she had to scale back her aspirations to what was realistically achievable.

Cirkel Life was born. The brand tries to use only natural fibres and viscose to prevent fibre shedding during the washing process, but due to the sheer volume of elastane in denim Karlie has had to relax that rule, deciding it's better to save from landfill and send it around again!

Garments are made using 100 % cotton thread and recycled trims where available. Everything is designed, patterned and made in Mount Maunganui and the goal is to include a take-back scheme called 'Re-cirkeled' where anything created is either re-sold, disassembled and recreated into something else, or able to be composted back into the earth when its lifecycle is finally complete.

Karlie has been an active member of working groups with Usedfully, looking into the post-consumer waste conundrum here in NZ and working to formulate pathways for these waste textiles including an aggregation centre where industry can send their waste textiles and remakers just like Karlie can then access a central hub of reusable resources.

Read more about Cirkel Life [here](#).

“Mindful fashion has been a remarkable resource for connecting with like minded industry players for the inspiration and optimism they provide with all they are also doing in this space.”

Karlie Morrow, Founder, Cirkel Life

Hawes and Freer - Where quality generates sustainability

Hawes and Freer supplies textiles and trims to the industry in New Zealand and was established by Tom Hawes in 1922, which makes it one of our longest serving suppliers.

It sources from both Europe and Asia and focuses on working with suppliers that have recognised the need to produce fabric in a more sustainable way. The emphasis is on quality fabrics and Hawes and Freer works with mills that have certifications which are regularly audited.

It is constantly working towards improving its chain of supply and the textiles and trims it offers, to have more environmentally conscious options for both retail and wholesale customers.

In 2020 Hawes and Freer introduced a range of certified recycled fusing/interfacing as well as the supply of certified organic cottons.

One key challenge for many in the New Zealand designer industry, is having the ability to buy quality and sustainable fabrics on an ongoing accessible basis. This is where Hawes and Freer see the role of wholesalers such as itself adding real value to the industry.

Hawes and Freer partners with waste innovators Supertrash NZ to recycle its plastic into fencing, sends out parcels in compostable packaging, and finds creative way to reuse textile offcuts and samples by partnering with community groups and small businesses who have a use for them.

Read more about Hawes and Freer's work [here](#).



“The work and value our New Zealand designers contribute to the economy needs to be recognised more both by consumers and the Government.”

Trevor Hookway, CEO, Hawes and Freer



Wall Fabrics

“Our sourcing model stems from long-term relationships with leading international designers, garment makers, mills, and agents, through which we procure predominately deadstock fabrics. Nurturing these partnerships over many years allows us to continually source some of the best designer fabrics for the fashion market, with a large focus on natural fibres.

We produce a range of fabrics in partnership with trusted mills and suppliers, some who we have been dealing with for over a decade. The relationship we have with our suppliers has enabled us to grow with each other, through our shared focus on ethical and environmental standards. Included in our range are certified organic cottons and hemp, certified linens, as well ZQ merino jersey, sourced entirely from New Zealand wool.”

Read more about Wall Fabrics [here](#).

Case Study

Care for Life promise - Standard Issue

Achieving a zero-waste lifecycle for everything it creates is at the heart of everything at Standard Issue.

It achieves this through use of technology. Firstly, always pushing the boundaries on what can be achieved on a whole-garment knitting machine. If the intricacies of a knit detail do not allow us to knit whole-garment, we have partnered with a local textile company that repurposes all our offcuts into household insulation products. The 100 % natural nature of Standard Issue allows us to do this, as this partner does not accept synthetic fibres.

And lastly, every garment Standard Issue creates comes with its care for life promise. The brand works alongside its community to either renew (mend), reuse (gift) or repurpose (recycle) the knit when the time comes, to ensure it never ends up in landfill.

While there are eye-watering statistics within the industry that compel its zero-waste values, it is a connection to the land and view that everything starts and ends with the land that Standard Issue says has shaped so much of its journey. "We are simply custodians while on this earth, and it is our role to leave it better for future generations. We are on a mission to support better, each and every day."

Read more about Standard Issues Care for Life [here](#).



It was growing up on this land that I subconsciously learnt and recognised the intrinsic link between our actions and the impact it has on the land, people and animals around us."

Emma CEO and Co-Owner of Standard Issue.

Case Study

Scraps to caps - Offcut creates change with waste

Inherent in its name "Offcut" is the brand's commitment to making its products from offcut material that's destined for landfill. Offcut takes fabric scraps from the textile industry, and turns those scraps into caps.

The fabric it sources includes end of rolls, fabric with imperfections, small offcut pieces that can't be used for garments, and even old curtains, duvets, and sheets no longer fit for purpose. Due to the fact that Offcut can never be too sure of what fabrics will come its way, all of the caps are bespoke, with usually no more than 50 of each hat being made, and sometimes only 2 or 3.

Offcut realise that it's not going to change the world by making hats... and it's not trying to. What it is trying to do is make people realise that the first step in reducing human overconsumption is to make use of the resources that have already been invested in making.

The business is challenged to think creatively about where to find offcut fabric, and its hope is that this will inspire others in the industry to rethink their own "waste" and use it creatively. Eventually, if Offcut succeeds in its goal of inspiring industry to use 100 % of their by-products, the company will (by the nature of its business model) have put itself out of business! Read more about Offcuts work [here](#).

"Good for your head and even better for the planet."

Hannah Ward (Co-owner)



Waste not - How RUBY is working towards zero waste

Industry standard is for 25 % of fabric to be treated as wastage. At Ruby it has set a waste target and reports on this weekly as a production team to ensure the target is being met. In 2020 Ruby introduced fabric offcut boxes in its stores, which allows customers to take home Ruby fabric offcuts to make their own small items, such as face masks and book bags.

Realising not everyone has access to the patterns for these, Ruby printed the pattern on its 2020/2021 wrapping paper. This means that every customer leaves a Ruby store with a free pattern, and the fabric to make it is available to them for free.

In addition, offcuts of fabrics used in production are repurposed within Ruby's Academy Technical Training Workshops. Apprentices use the fabrics in innovative ways to create garments, to divert the fabric from heading to landfills.

Locally, fabric offcuts are donated to schools and universities. Ruby also works with We Compost to compost its unusable sampling offcuts which are made from 100 % natural fibres. The breakdown of these offcuts has a 2-3 month timeframe alongside its food and green waste.

Through a partnership with The Recreators Ruby cut and sew off-cuts are being used for a variety of teaching projects, including with NCEA Te Kura students, and smaller scraps are being used by a group of Tongan woman from Mangere who are designing Upcycled Lei Kits for kids – the idea being to teach Pacifica children the lost art of lei braiding. The smaller offcuts will be turned into fabric leaves.

Read more on Ruby's Toolbox for Change [here](#).

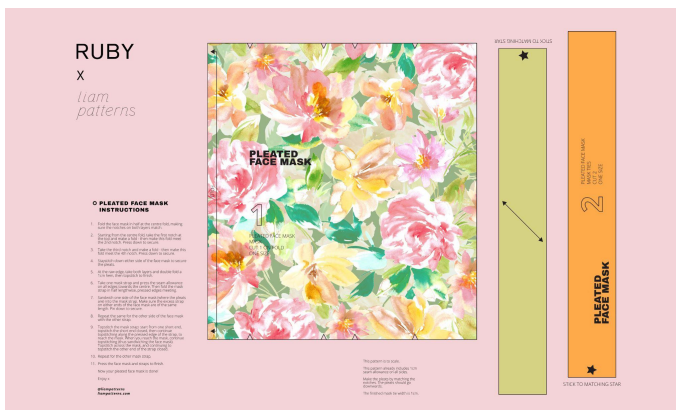
Meanwhile sister brand Liam recently launched a zero-waste collection. In response to lockdowns in NZ during 2020, Liam launched a collection of patterns with the aim of giving its customers the ability to create their own garments and learn about the process hands on, making fabric available to them.

It has continued to release the patterns along with new collections so customers can make their own version of the brands styles, and in October 2021 it partnered with @geo_knits_slow to create one-of-a-kind hand knitted pieces from the brands fabric waste offcuts.

All the offcuts produced in the making of it's Liam everything collection have been collected, sorted, cut into strips, weighed and sent to geo of @geo_knits_slow and her posse of knitters to turn into these pieces. The collection has also released patterns so customers can make their own Liam x @geo_knits_slow pieces at home.

“We believe making things gives so much to people. There is a slowness and a very internal process that goes on when you make things with your hands that we think can be a powerful tool for positive mental health outcomes.”

Emily Miller-Sharma, General Manager, Ruby



Kate Sylvester - Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle

RELOVED

Kate Sylvester's Reloved platform that has been giving new life to preloved Kate Sylvester garments since August 2019 and takes the brand a step closer towards achieving its goal of circularity. Reloved extends the use of garments by giving old favourites a new lease of life by getting them out of the back of closets and into new loving homes. Kate Sylvester now has over 1000 users on its Reloved site, and it is incredibly proud to continue to see the growth of this platform.

UPCYCLING

To celebrate Fashion Revolution Week in April this year, Kate Sylvester released its first Upcycling capsule collection, taking past season dead stock or flawed garments and reimagining them into completely new items. This was a completely creative project for Kate and the team, fringed blouses became evening bags, two event dresses were combined to become one, yoryu has been smocked and turned a billowy two-piece, full skirts have become lean dresses and much more.

“This project has been such a creative, rewarding way to keep Kate Sylvester clothing in use for longer. We’ve turned damaged and dead stock into beautiful one-off garments and it’s allowed us to think really creatively to give these garments a new lease of life.”

Kate Sylvester, founder

In November Kate Sylvester will release its second Upcycling capsule, this time using ends of fabric rolls to create a collection of one off multi-print pieces in beloved KS shapes. It has also used fabric offcuts to make oversized scrunchies and tote bags.

MINIMISING WASTE AND RECYCLING

Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle are key practices in the waste policy at Kate Sylvester. To do its part to minimise the volume of garments that end up in landfill each year and extend the life of Kate Sylvester garments it has a complimentary repair service for its garments. The brand reuses excess fabrics for toiling samples for upcoming seasons, or donates fabric to fashion technology interns and school projects. In 2021 it has participated in a project with local primary schools, donating fabric off-cuts and scraps to be made into beeswax food wraps and reusable shopping bags.

Read more about Kate Sylvester initiatives [here](#).



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Nisa - Big impact through small garments

Nisa was founded with the idea of setting up a sewing workshop to provide employment opportunities to people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The brand landed on underwear as its core product believing that there is already enough clothing in the world, whereas underwear is something that we all genuinely need.

In its Wellington workshop, Nisa manufactures underwear and basics and provides employment and skills development to a growing number of employees. At Nisa a job is about so much more than just a pay cheque, although financial independence is a great outcome. It also believes a job is about making friends, practising English and feeling valued as a member of the team.

The Nisa workshop is open to the public, and the brand runs tours to show customers what a small garment production facility looks like. They run a lean manufacturing process which means they make to meet demand rather than potentially overproduce in advance. Nisa uses sustainable and regenerated fabrics, and its packaging and distribution is plastic-free and carbon neutral.

For Nisa, consideration for everyone involved in making its garments, and the subsequent environmental impact is of the utmost importance, and it provides transparent information about its materials and production to customers, encouraging them to ask questions and prioritise sustainability even when they're shopping elsewhere. Read more about Nisa's mission [here](#).



Case Study

How Yu Mei takes an holistic approach to responsible practices

“Yu Mei is accredited by Living Wage Aotearoa, meaning 100% of staff and contractors are paid a Living Wage. In forming our leadership team it was important to ensure we respect the natural diversity of our team. This means ensuring that the proportion of women, and people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community and/or from underrepresented racial or ethnic minorities are accurately represented.

Within the industry, the standard is to pay minimum wage through the supply chain. For Yu Mei it was important to address this through Living Wage for our staff and who we work with through our Supplier Code of Conduct which also ensures support and promotion of diversity of external teams.

At Yu Mei we believe in the intrinsic value of leather as a naturally regenerative and long lasting material. With proper care, leather goods should last a lifetime. As our pieces are designed from a lens of functionality, we understand that needs change and sometimes you may need a different size or style of bag. We exchange preloved bags for credit, while refurbishing and repairing, so they can live a second life with a new home. The unique aspect of our programme is the refurbishment piece. We're not simply circulating second hand goods — we're improving them so they will last even longer.

In the industry, there has been a resurgence of purchasing goods second hand. With our Buyback Initiative, the key difference is that products we receive can be lovingly restored to ensure the longest life possible for the next wearer. Within the industry there is a focus on seasonally what is new and exciting, whereas for Yu Mei we have always been driven by a utilitarian approach to design, and what meets the ever-changing needs of our customers, rather than being driven to create for the sole purpose of new and exciting.”

Find out more about Yu Mei [here](#).

“When you no longer need a product, that doesn't mean it's not useful for someone else, it just means your relationship with that product is ending. We've made it our mission to match used leather goods with loving new owners to extend each product's useful life.”

Jessie Wong, Yu Mei Founder

