



**MINDFUL FASHION
NEW ZEALAND**

SUSTAINABILITY INSIGHTS REPORT 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

First sustainability baseline of the NZ fashion and textiles industry

Executive Summary

Mindful Fashion's mission is to unite Aotearoa New Zealand's clothing and textile industry to create an innovative, full-circle and thriving future.

The release of our inaugural Sustainability Insights Report, an industry first for New Zealand, comes at an important time for the sector globally and here in New Zealand.

The fashion industry is facing a significant number of sustainability-related interconnected challenges such as increasing consumption and waste, high emissions, degenerative materials and a poor track record on labour rights. Shoppers, investors and NGOs are demanding more transparency and responsibility from the sector and the Covid-19 pandemic has only added to these challenges.

As an island nation distanced from global supply chains, pressures are mounting to become more self sufficient and build resilience and capability within our shores for the industry to continue to survive and thrive in New Zealand.

We know our members are doing some great work within their businesses to tackle sustainability challenges. We put a lot of thought into how best to approach taking them further on the journey to a more sustainable industry, and at the same time bring some of these stories to life to inspire others and increase ambition.

One of the things we have grappled with is presenting a balanced view, showing the reality of the current situation and the pathway forward, while at the same time acknowledging where we have had success. Therefore this report isn't a shiny brochure, it's an open and honest look at where we are at today, and where we are heading.

Using four key interconnected sustainability impact areas, we surveyed our members to get a baseline measure of their current sustainability progress, and used this to identify opportunities for further action where Mindful Fashion can play a role to advance sustainability.

WHERE ARE WE NOW

There is a lot to celebrate, with progress being made in many areas.

Certifications and standards are the most widely used tool for materials sustainability. 92.5 percent of our members use standards for some or all of their materials, while 85 percent have a plan or strategy in place to improve the sustainability of their materials.

Many members are working to reduce their carbon emissions through actions related to waste reduction, fibre and material choice, switching to renewable energy, using carbon neutral freight providers and prioritising sea freight over air freight. There is opportunity here to enable companies to measure their footprints in order to quantify reductions and encourage further work in the supply chain.

Textile waste is a focus area for clothing and textile companies, both pre- and post-consumer, and there are significant barriers to action in this area. To address this many of our members have developed bespoke initiatives with 40 percent diverting more than half their cut and sew waste from landfill, and a further 36 percent diverting some (<half).

A growing number of members are using third party labour certifications to help ensure fair labour practices when working with suppliers. The Mindful Fashion Code of Conduct is also an important tool when working with suppliers.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

These insights provide a measure of the industry's current progress and give us a starting point to build on for further action. Later in the report, we share a range of next steps to take these insights further.

The industry has shown it wants to work together to tackle common challenges. This is evidenced by participation in Mindful Fashion, in our working groups and in our engagement with the industry at large. Collaboration is important if we want to make progress on sustainability in a way that works for our New Zealand industry, and for us as a country.

We have identified 12 key actions for Mindful Fashion, where we can drive collaborative work. These include working with members to establish a collective commitment on climate action, to investigating solutions for cut and sew textile waste, promoting an increase in the active life of clothes and building capability in sustainability knowledge.

These actions support and enhance work Mindful Fashion has underway to build resilience and capacity in the local industry. Through our cross industry working group, we are mapping industry skills and roles to identify where training and skills development is needed and to focus recruitment efforts in these areas. We are engaging with both Government agencies and private training providers to develop training programs for technical roles, in particular machinist training.

This report provides a snapshot of the current baseline. We know there is much to be done, that with sustainability you don't arrive, it is a continuous journey of change and progress. The landscape is constantly evolving as new technology and information comes to hand. Our members have shown a commitment to this journey through their participation in Mindful Fashion.

We would therefore like to acknowledge the support and collaboration of our members, our partners, our advisors, and the companies that took part in this first baseline for industry benchmarking.

Mindful Fashion is uniquely positioned to drive the collaboration required to build a sustainable future for the fashion industry here, and we look forward to continuing to learn and collaborate with our members and all our stakeholders both locally and globally. Together, we can be part of the solution.

Join us!

Jacinta FitzGerald
Programme Director
Mindful Fashion New Zealand

KEY OPPORTUNITIES & ACTIONS

The Mindful Fashion Sustainability Insights report provides a measure of the baseline of our members sustainability work across four interconnected impact areas. A summary of our key findings are outlined here, along with our 12 priority actions. More detail is given in each section in the full report.

CLIMATE

An overwhelming majority of members (94 %) want support to measure their GHG emissions.

Almost 10 % are currently measuring their emissions.

This has been identified as a key area - it's the top sustainability challenge for many businesses, an area of concern for New Zealanders, and we have incoming regulation in New Zealand.

This is also an area that is applicable to all our members, regardless of type of business.

OUR NEXT STEPS

1. Work with members to set goals they can commit to for climate action.
2. Develop a roadmap with members to guide work towards achieving goal and milestones.
3. Align with/ join local and global initiatives, and provide tools to help members measure and manage their footprint and achieve targets.

MATERIALS

Most members have some understanding of fibre and material sustainability, and are taking action to improve the sustainability of the materials they use.

Most of our members are using a framework or have a strategy in place for more sustainable materials, others tackle it in a less formal way.

Most members would like additional support to extend their knowledge to enable a greater uptake of low impact materials.

OUR NEXT STEPS

1. Develop an information series that provides education to members about certifications and standards for fibres and materials.
2. Provide education and tools to build knowledge of materials sustainability to drive increased use of low impact materials..
3. Align/work with global initiatives to enable evidence based decisions, and provide case study examples of best practice sector wide to educate and drive action.

WASTE

Textile waste is top of mind for most members; both pre-consumer cut and sew, and textile waste, and post consumer garment waste.

Many are working on small scale solutions for cut and sew textile waste in particular, however only a small percentage run a takeback scheme for used clothing.

There is potential to create positive environmental outcomes by increasing the useful life of clothing and finding circular solutions for waste, from packaging and hangers to cut and sew textile waste..

OUR NEXT STEPS

1. Investigate takeback, recommerce, repair and clothing life-extension, look at feasibility of collective projects
2. Continue to share innovations and best practice to drive reduction of textile waste.
3. Investigate recycling initiatives for waste, including cut and sew textile waste; look at feasibility of collective circular textile projects.

PEOPLE

Living wages and cultural literacy are areas members are interested in building capacity in.

Building a skilled workforce is top of mind for members, especially in the manufacturing area.

For local procurement, members would like to develop a deeper understanding of policy including the Mindful Fashion Code of Conduct.

Certifications and standards are the most widely used tool to ensure responsible global supply chains.

OUR NEXT STEPS

1. Provide guidance on incorporating the Mindful Fashion Code into procurement policies. Run workshops to share best practice on policies and procurement.
2. Engage external experts to run a cultural literacy program and Living wage sessions for members.
3. Continue to work with PTEs and Government to develop workforce development programs, both on-the-job apprenticeships and short training courses to meet current and future demands.

SUSTAINABILITY ROADMAP

Our roadmap illustrates the timeframe we expect to undertake these actions, mapped alongside our current projects to show the full scope of work we are undertaking.

	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	Q1 2022	Q2 2022	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023
CLIMATE					DEVELOP CLIMATE COMMITMENT					
					DEVELOP CLIMATE ROADMAP THROUGH MEMBER ENGAGEMENT					
					ALIGN WITH/ JOIN LOCAL AND GLOBAL INITIATIVES, PROVIDE TOOLS FOR ACTION					
MATERIALS			STANDARDS / CERTIFICATIONS EDUCATION (current)							
						EDUCATION & TOOLS TO DRIVE INCREASED USE OF LOW IMPACT MATERIALS				
	CONTINUE TO BUILD PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL AND GLOBAL INITIATIVES TO ENABLE EVIDENCE BASED LOW IMPACT DECISION MAKING									
WASTE	DEVELOP CIRCULAR TEXTILES GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS (current)									
	CONTINUE WORK TO SHARE CIRCULAR INNOVATIONS AND INITIATIVES TO DRIVE REDUCTION OF TEXTILE WASTE									
						INVESTIGATE CLOTHING LIFE-EXTENSION PROJECTS				
					INVESTIGATE/IMPLEMENT RECYCLING INITIATIVES & COLLECTIVE WASTE REDUCTION PROJECTS					
PEOPLE	APPRENTICESHIP & SHORT TRAINING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT (current)									
			SKILL/ROLE MAPPING (current)							
						PROCUREMENT GUIDANCE				
						LIVING WAGE/CULTURAL LITERACY				

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