



Emissions Reduction Plan Discussion Document

SUBMISSION FROM MINDFUL FASHION NEW ZEALAND

Industry organisation for NZ's clothing and textile Industry

24th November 2021

The clothing and textiles industry is highly greenhouse gas-intensive, with estimated emissions ranging from 2 to 8 percent of the global total.¹ Emissions occur along the value chain from raw material production and processing to garment manufacturing, and garment use, care and disposal.

Industry research undertaken by Mindful Fashion in July 2021 shows that clothing and textile businesses in New Zealand recognise climate change as one of their biggest risks, and most urgent priorities². Mindful Fashion members of the New Zealand clothing and textiles industry want to act, but the vast majority, over 90 percent, haven't begun to measure their emissions yet and want support to do so.

Many businesses in the industry in New Zealand are doing some work to reduce emissions through actions related to waste reduction and recycling, materials choice, instituting repair programs, switching to renewable energy, and using carbon neutral freight providers. However on the whole, the scale of change needs to accelerate with a marked increase in ambition and cohesion.

To reach the low-emissions, climate-resilient and circular future Aotearoa New Zealand needs, the clothing and textiles industry needs to act faster.

What's needed is a common vision and roadmap to create the guiding light for the industry to move towards, ongoing training to support the transition, and greater investment in new opportunities to enable our actions to accelerate. We need to know what the low carbon and circular future looks like, understand how to get there and have support to take action. Areas of particular importance for this sector are the circular economy - that means designing out waste, pollution and greenhouse gases, keeping materials in circulation and helping natural systems to regenerate, along with product/materials choice.

There is an enormous data gap which urgently needs to be addressed. Ongoing training is needed to enable emissions to be measured and reduced, coupled with investment in new opportunities to accelerate the transition to a low carbon and circular industry.

It is estimated that over 70 percent of a garments cradle to grave emissions come from raw material extraction and the production of textiles in a linear take-make-waste model.⁴ The majority of our textiles are imported into New Zealand, manufactured in countries where coal-fired power is common along the supply chain, and businesses may have limited control or influence.

With typically long global value chains, collaboration and collective action are key to creating effective solutions for the industry. Our industry must collaborate, within New Zealand and with international counterparts to create systems wide change. There is also an opportunity to incentivise procurement of lower environmental impact materials, and to invest in infrastructure in New Zealand to create high value textiles in areas where it makes commercial sense.

Controlling some of our own textile production will build a more resilient industry within our own shores enabling us to meet increased demand for New Zealand made products and be cushioned from some global market fluctuations.



It's imperative to have a sector wide strategy and roadmap rather than a piecemeal approach to create effective change. We urge the Government to work with industry organisations such as Mindful Fashion New Zealand to develop industry specific programs that will lead businesses in a collaborative way towards our collective vision for a low carbon future where people and nature thrive.

Our recommendations are:

We support the intention to empower central and local government, iwi/Māori, communities and business to act.

On this point we recommend the Government:

- Support the sector to develop a common vision and roadmap for a low carbon, circular and regenerative future by investing in the development of a sector wide strategy with a roadmap to 2030 that targets all stakeholders in the textiles value chain in New Zealand.
 - Precedent for this approach has been shown by the British Fashion Council's Institute of Positive Fashion Circular Fashion Ecosystem, the EU Roadmap for Circular Textiles and the Australian Government Textiles Product Stewardship Roadmap with the Australian Fashion Council.

We support aligning system settings and using cross-sector tools.

On this point we recommend the Government:

- Invest in the development of a clear, common narrative on the impacts and scope for action against climate change that targets consumer behaviour change, to reduce volumes of consumption and waste - use the fashion industry's ability to communicate effectively to drive this. It's vital consumers are taken along on the journey, emissions at the consumer use phase are responsible for up to 24% of cradle to grave emissions.
- Co-Invest with the private sector in infrastructure to enable a circular economy for textiles in New Zealand.

We support the intention to develop mechanisms and levers that make it easier for people to make low-emission choices, move to a circular economy and develop the bioeconomy.

On this point we recommend the Government:

- Investigate the use of trade policy to incentivise better practice in materials sourcing. This would remove a key barrier to scaling environmentally preferred materials: increased cost. This would level the playing field for fashion and textile companies looking to lower their environmental impacts.
 - Environmentally preferred materials should be defined as those from certified, verified sources that can be traced from raw material to finished product, and that are connected to data-driven environmental impact reductions. Organic cotton typically has a lower carbon footprint than conventional cotton, for example.
- Prioritise New Zealand made clothing in Government procurement for specific product categories to support the development and productivity of local industry, infrastructure and product stewardship.



We support the approach to deliver an equitable transition that is fair and inclusive, in particular proactive transition planning with regional communities, economies and stakeholders strengthen skills training and education systems.

On this point we recommend the Government:

- Support the clothing and textile industry's workforce development programs, in particular ensuring development of the skills needed to enable a circular economy; from repair and remanufacturer, to cross sector resource recovery and reuse.
- Invest in targeted infrastructure to build local supply chains for high value production of textile products in New Zealand.

Thank you for your consideration.

For further information please contact:

Jacinta FitzGerald
Programme Director
MINDFUL FASHION NEW ZEALAND

jacinta@mindfulfashion.co.nz
www.mindfulfashion.co.nz

1. World Resources Institute, Apparel Impact Institute, (2021). *Roadmap to Net-zero Delivering Science-Based Targets in the Apparel Sector*. Available at: <https://apparelimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/21_WorkingPaper_RoadmapNetZero_.pdf>
2. Mindful Fashion New Zealand (2021) Sustainability Insights Report. Available at: <www.mindfulfashion.co.nz>
3. Meinrenkenm Christoph J. et al, (2020) *Carbon emissions embodied in product value chains and the role of Life Cycle Assessment in curbing them*, Nature. Available at: <<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-62030-x>>
4. UNEP (2020) Sustainability and Circularity in the Textile Value Chain. Available at: <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/unep_sustainability_and_circularity_textile_value_chain_1.pdf>