



Media Release
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NZ's fashion and textile industry fast-track decarbonisation

New Zealand's fashion and textile industry is taking a significant step forward, addressing climate change and improving how clothes are brought to market and managed at end-of-use, by implementing a Textile Product Stewardship Scheme co-designed by the industry.

The clothing and textile industry is one of the largest and most impactful industries in the world. Over 100 billion garments are produced worldwide each year with only a fraction ever recycled. By 2050 it is forecasted to consume more than 26% of the carbon budget associated with a 2°C pathway. Their outsized impacts to volume makes textile products both a priority and an opportunity for decarbonisation.

Textile waste is one of New Zealand's fastest growing waste streams with more than 220,000 tonnes ending up in landfills each year. Representing a gross waste of a high value, carbon intensive resource. Market expectation is shifting as more and more people become aware of the impacts of the clothes they wear. Businesses are facing increasing 'make it, take it' demand, the expectation that customers can return garments at their end-of-use.

Product Stewardship is a preferred tool of government and a key component of the Waste Minimisation Act (2008), which enables the establishment of voluntary and mandatory Product Stewardship programs to reduce waste and help transition the market from a linear to a circular economy. The [Textile Product Stewardship Project](#) sits within the [Textile Reuse Programme](#) which was established in 2016 aligning industry players in a shared vision and commitment to a circular economy for clothing and textiles in New Zealand. Driving large scale, collaborative projects creating new technologies and [solutions](#) to radically reduce the environmental impacts of what we wear. The Textile Product Stewardship Project is a multi year project which has been co-designed by NZ's fashion and textile industry, for the industry and Aotearoa to create a low emissions, circular economy for clothing and textiles onshore. Funded by The Ministry for the Environment's Te Pūtea Whakamauru Para - Waste Minimisation Fund's (WMF) 2019 funding round and the Textile Reuse Programme foundation partners, AlSCO NZ, Barkers Clothing, Deane Apparel and Wellington City Council.

During Stage One of the Project (2020 - 2021) over two hundred industry stakeholders participated in workshops, working groups and interviews co-designing a Voluntary Textile Product Stewardship Scheme and delivering to the New Zealand Government a set of [Industry Recommendations](#).

Stage 2, launched this week, is the doing phase. The demonstration and proving of a pilot scheme, testing waste-to-value pathways and providing Government with the industry's recommendations of an appropriate vehicle to administer an accredited Voluntary Product Stewardship Scheme for Textiles in Aotearoa.

Deregulation and the free market policy approach of the 1980's and 1990's decimated New Zealand's manufacturing base hitting the textile industry particularly hard. The ability to lower emissions and extract value from waste is dependent on the processes and infrastructure available. New Zealand is the largest producer of waste per capita and has the lowest recycling rates in the OECD. Infrastructure NZ estimates that there is a recycling infrastructure gap across all industries in New Zealand of between \$2.1 - 2.6 billion which is needed to divert waste from landfill. A small Product Stewardship levy on textile products brought to market will finance the missing infrastructure gaps, ensuring the maximum possible volume of textiles is diverted from landfill reducing waste and emissions while maximising the value of our existing resources. *"We have a responsibility to take local action to support a more sustainable, decarbonised industry. For every 10,000 tonnes of recovered textile resources we can generate about 300 new jobs in the low carbon, circular economy, creating economic opportunity onshore in Aotearoa"* says Peter Thompson, CEO of Usedfully, project lead.

Business and Product Development Manager for AlSCO New Zealand Gavin Smith is enthusiastic about the project, *"AlSCO's New Zealand textile rental operation needs to dispose of more than 200 tonnes of cottons and polycottons annually, this project enables us to do something positive about it by co-designing a system for the reuse of these valuable resources onshore in New Zealand."* The project is guided by an Advisory Group composed of experts in Fashion, Stewardship and the Circular Economy, including Emma Wallace, Managing Director Kowtow, Saeid Baroutain from University of Auckland's Sustainable Resource Recovery Programme, Alexander Kirkham Senior Specialist Infrastructure & Environmental Services at Auckland Council, James Stonyer, Commercial Manager from Deane Apparel, James Griffin General Manager Projects at Sustainable Business Network and Brian Johnston, Sustainability Specialist at Usedfully.

New Zealand's clothing and textile industry is committed to creating a better future, with the drive and the tenacity to make that future a reality, implementing concrete and collaborative systemic solutions at national scale. Any organisation that produces, supplies or uses clothing or textiles and wants to make tangible positive impact can join the [Textile Reuse](#)

[Programme](#) or register their interest in the Product Stewardship Project on the Textile Reuse Programme [website](#) creating the low carbon future of fashion and textiles in Aotearoa.

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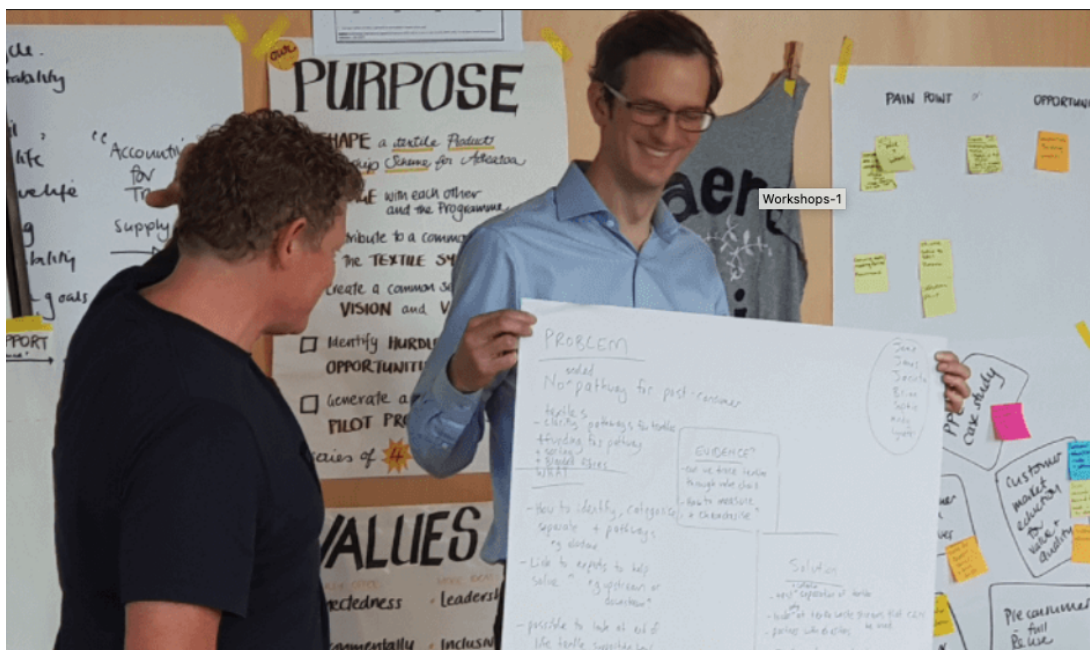
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Supporting information:

[Industry Recommendations to Government](#)

[Sector Research and Reports by Usedfully](#)



Jamie Whiting (CEO Barkers Clothing) and Brian Johnston (Usedfully Sustainability Specialist) Textile Product Stewardship design workshop



Sophie Donovan (Kate Sylvester) and Emily Miller-Sharmer (Ruby)
Textile Product Stewardship design workshop