

Sustainable purchasing

Apparel 2024

1. Reduce, reuse and recycle

Charity shops and second-hand markets are your best friends. There is a whole world of preloved and vintage clothing out there at your disposal. Not only are you saving money, it's very sustainable too.

If you are overhauling your wardrobe don't reach for the bin, instead donate your unwanted items to a local charity shop. Your clothes will be passed on to a new owner, and the money they spend will go towards a good cause.



2. Make do and mend

The most sustainable fashion buying decision you can make is to make do with what you already have, through proper care and simple repair techniques.

If something gets a hole or stained, learn how to mend it yourself or visit **UQ's Repair Cafe**. There are plenty of how-to resources for sewing on buttons, patching a hole, and mending a hem. These are easy skills to learn and ensure that minor functional issues don't mean you have to throw away.



3. Shop smarter

Think 'quality over quantity' and shop for items that will last. If you're in the habit of regularly renewing your wardrobe, buying fewer items at a higher quality will help reduce your environmental impact.

When buying a new item ask yourself the following questions

- Do you need the garment?
- Is it good quality?
- Does it require a lot of washing?
- Is the style one that will last?
- Will I want to wear this in five, 10 years?



✓ Choose natural fibres

Fabrics made from renewable, natural fibres like hemp, cashmere, bamboo, wool, linen (made of flax fibres) and tencel (semi-synthetic fibre is made from Eucalyptus trees) provide a great alternative to cotton and synthetics. These fibres usually have a smaller environmental impact than synthetic fibres and cotton, both during the production process and at the end of their life.



✓ Choose organic fibres

Organic refers to natural fibres being grown and produced without the use of toxic and persistent pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. Cotton is probably the most common organic fibre you can buy, if the fabric is **GOTS certified** (Global Organic Textile Standard) organic cotton, you know that it contains at least 95% organic fibre.



✓ Choose recycled textiles and fabrics

Recycled textiles are largely created from waste materials, for example recycled polyester and econyl (recycled nylon) are produced from waste materials such as PET plastic bottles, apparel or nylon fishing nets.

Reclaimed fabric is made from material offcuts leftover during the manufacturing process.



✓ Choose Oeko-Tex and other certified textiles

BlueSign and **OEKO-TEX** are standards that address textile sustainability. Both focus specifically on toxic chemicals that are added to garments during the manufacturing process.



✓ Choose 3rd party certified ethical worker conditions

Organisations such as **Fair Labor Association (FLA)** and **World-wide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP)** certify that fair labour standards are being applied.

Fair Trade fabric and clothing refers only to the production of the fabric and not to the manufacturing of garments.

Ethical Clothing Australia is an accreditation body who provide ethical manufacturing certification to fashion labels who manufacture their clothing in Australia.

Baptist World Aid Australia's annual **Ethical Fashion Guide** grades companies on labour rights and the possibility of exploitation in their supply chain.



✓ Choose unbleached fabrics and natural dyes

Chlorine bleach is commonly used as both a dye and a pre-colour treatment. Chlorine bleach can have negative impacts for both human health and the environment.



✓ Choose untreated fabrics

Chemically treating fabric with formaldehyde or a formaldehyde derivate is often used to make clothing wrinkle or shrinkage-free, flame-resistant, waterproof, stain-resistant, mildew-resistant, or cling-free. Formaldehyde is listed by the International Agency for Research on Cancer as a probable cancer-causing agent. Formaldehyde derivatives are less toxic but can still release formaldehyde as they break down.

✓ Buy local with locally produced materials

When possible, look for locally made garments, made with locally produced materials. Buying locally reduces the environmental impacts of transportation and also supports our local communities.



Use the **Where to buy guide** (UQ login required) for information on how to purchase apparel for work purposes. Purchasing through UQ's approved arrangements provides assurance that the supplier has been assessed by UQ as having a high level of environmental and ethical standards.