



# ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY



## Environmental Policy

We are in recognition of the fundamental interconnectedness of all things. We are each a small but potent part of this single organism, our planet.

We work from the understanding that every choice we make, as businesses and as consumers, impacts others and also the whole. Therefore we see a direct link between every choice, big and small, and our environmental stability.

Our Environmental Policy is one chapter of our Code of Ethics. It reflects what's embedded in the bones of our business: our heartfelt mission to respect the natural resources of our planet. To conserve and to go a step further by continuing to imagine the future of a flourishing environment and so, we innovate. Independently and collaboratively we put into practice solutions that nourish and give back from where we take.

We believe our life on this planet is an amazing gift, and also a sacred responsibility.

It is our intention to act with full consciousness and integrity, and we are committed to our own continual improvement. Putting this into practice, we participate in a loop monitor and modify system where we examine our environmental impact, assess where we can improve, set goals and then implement strategies that enable us to reach them. Then...we begin the loop again.

With our initiatives and campaigns we work to raise awareness, educate and inspire positive action. At both the grassroots and business levels, we take global issues and find local solutions, setting an example of environmental responsibility with every choice made.

We collaborate with others who are similarly committed and require that all those entering into business with us also commit to this policy.



We see that we have two categories of impact:

1/ Direct: the impact of WE'AR's own activities including our buying practices, our team's travel, our facilities (offices, workrooms, retail stores) and our design & manufacturing choices.

2/ Indirect: WE'AR's opportunities for influence within our supply chain and in our local & global communities.

## **Our Six Commitments**

Our goals are built on these six commitments that lead to hundreds of conscious choices:

- To increase our use of environmentally preferred materials.
- To cut back our resource consumption: materials, paper, water & energy.
- To reduce & compensate for our carbon footprint.
- To eliminate hazardous substances from all activities.
- To increase our recycling & use of recycled materials.
- To educate, raise awareness & keep the conversation alive

## **Environmentally Preferred Materials**

When the option is available, we always choose environmentally preferred materials. Each year we set a target to increase our preferred material use and work towards it.

When selecting, we use a benchmark that is based on robust life cycle analysis data of all environmental, health and social impacts of the growing and processing of fibres and materials.

Environmentally preferred materials either cause less or do not cause pollution or soil erosion. In some cases they go further and actively nourish the soil they grow in. They use less water & energy, less or no chemicals and are usually biodegradable.



Examples of our preferred materials:

**Organic Cotton:** Unlike conventional cotton, Organic cotton comes from non-GM plants, is grown without the use of chemicals (fertilizers & pesticides) usually uses less water in it's growth and actually supports a healthy ecosystem, nourishing the soil as it grows. Unfortunately, organic cotton makes up only around one percent of the total cotton market, making it difficult to source. WE'AR make every effort to use certified organic cotton wherever available.

**Sustainable Cotton:** There is a fairly new movement in cotton growing which is cotton grown in the farm's transition phase between conventional cotton and organic cotton. It is sometimes referred to as In Conversion Cotton, or Better Cotton. Sustainable cotton crops conserve water use and minimize use of pesticides and fertilizers.

**Lyocell / Monocel ®:** is a processed viscose from bamboo. Lyocell is a better choice than conventional viscose or rayon because it is processed with substantially less toxic chemicals and also less water. Monocel ® (a brand of Lyocell) is made in a closed-loop manufacturing process where energy, chemicals and carbon discharged through the process is re-used.

**Lyocell / Tencel ®:** Is the same as above but made from wood pulp from sustainable forests.

**Lenzing Modal ®:** is a variation of viscose also made from wood pulp but using different processing. It is not as healthy for the environment as the two viscoses above, but it is still better than generic viscose, rayon or conventional cotton. It is also much preferred to nylon, elastane and even some wool materials.

**Natural Bamboo:** Bamboo is a magical plant that absorbs 5 times more carbon and produces 35 percent more oxygen than a similar stand of trees. It naturally regenerates, needs very little (if any) pesticides and improves soil quality. There are two ways to turn it into fibres: mechanically or chemically, the most common way, and used conventionally for viscose rayon (a bamboo derived fabric), is chemically. Sadly the chemical method has a heavy environmental impact. Natural bamboo though, uses mechanical processing so is very eco-friendly.



**Linen:** Made from the fibres of the flax plant, although a little less environmentally friendly than organic linen, conventional linen has a relatively low environmental impact, it requires very little water and energy and little to no chemicals in its growth.

**Alpaca:** Alpaca herds are easy on the land and promote sustainable habitat. They do not live in a fragile ecology, nor do they disturb the grass root system unlike other herds. They consume a small amount of water and their poop is good for fertilizer.

**Organic Wool & Merino:** is from sheep that have not been exposed to any chemicals such as pesticides or parasiticides. Neither have they been subject to synthetic hormones or genetic engineering. The sheep are kept in humane conditions (shorn in summer so they keep warm in winter, without mulesing etc.) with farm management practices that respect natural resources and prevent soil degradation or overgrazing.

**Brushtail possum:** The Brushtail possum was introduced to New Zealand in 1837 and is now the biggest ecological threat. The possum now live in nearly every part of the country and cause severe damage to native forests by eating through 17,000 tonnes of vegetation every night, threatening endangered species and native bird populations as they go. To date the population of the possum in NZ has been controlled using toxic chemicals. Their fur is beautiful, warm and soft and makes an excellent yarn, the use of which contributes to a reduction in both the population of a registered pest and also the reduction of the use of toxic chemicals.

**Peace Silk:** Peace silk is made from cocoons of semi-wild and wild moths that have emerged from their cocoons naturally. Wild-crafted peace silk also helps to maintain the forest habitat of moths through social programs that maintain the existence of forests it comes from.

**Emerging Eco-Luxe Materials:** We continue to research emerging eco-friendly fibres and are excited by the increasing number of textile development possibilities. For example Jute, Spanish Broom, Nettle & Ramie are all relatively new apparel fibres that are not yet readily available. These are rain-fed crops, so use less water and the environmental impacts are low. Most of these can be used alone or mixed with other fibres to create a special blend of a fresh textural profile with authentically sustainable credentials.



## **Purchasing Policy**

From the start, as well as choosing environmentally preferred materials, we have also continued a preference for choosing local suppliers wherever possible. This is important for our values - in part because we work to fully support, engage with and empower the communities in which we are based, and also because this choice is significantly better for the environment.

## **Resource Consumption**

We are committed to reducing our consumption of our planet's precious resources.

### **Efficient Design**

We consider efficient use of materials in all stages of the design and sampling process.

- We consider the final yield of fabric for each design to make sure there is no excessive use of materials.
- We continue to minimize the amount of materials used in the sampling process by improving the accuracy and efficiency of our fitting and patternmaking systems.
- We improve lay plan and cutting efficiency to reduce excess offcuts to a minimum.
- We upcycle as much unavoidable left over fabric cutting scraps for small useful items such as hair ties and bands, jewelry bags and swatch books.

### **Water & Energy Use**

Water and energy are both used in a multitude of ways in the lifecycle of every piece of clothing ever made. They are used in the growing of the crops, the processing of materials and in the dyeing and printing processes. We work to monitor and reduce our water and energy use through the whole process by a series of many careful choices.



- Raw materials: We increase our use of raw materials from the list above that use less water & energy in their creation.
- Processing: Because the bleaching process uses a lot of water and energy, on top of the more obvious toxic chemical use, we choose unbleached materials whenever they are available.
- Dyeing: We increase the use of natural and plant based dyes, which use less water and energy in their process, at the same time as being much less harmful on the environment. We also increase our use of dyeing processes, such as continuous line and cold pad batch dyeing, which are known to have reduced environmental impact compared to the conventional methods such as reactive, overflow and jet dyeing.
- Production: There is usually not much water or energy used in the production of the garments, but we check in with our suppliers regularly to make sure there are no leakages and to discuss resource consumption.
- Garment Finishing: We rarely use garment finishing in our process, but when we do we choose processes such as Enzyme washes that use limited water and energy and also do not use toxic chemical.
- Printing: Printing processes, apart from Ink Jet, all use a similar amount of water and energy. We continue to look at ways we can improve the impact of our printing processes. We currently use a combination of bio discharge printing and screen printing processes.
- Retail & Work bases: In all our stores, offices, workrooms and warehouses, we consider environmental impact in the initial fitout and use environmentally preferred building materials such as bamboo or wood from sustainably managed forests in their design. We are increasing the use of energy saving solutions such as using energy saving lightbulbs (LEDs and CFLs), insulating hot water tanks, setting heating and air conditioning at the most efficient temperatures (heatpumps in winter 18 – 22 degrees consistently and not switching on and off) and following policy to switch off equipment and lights that are not in use.

### **Sustainable Packaging & Paper**

- Packaging: We are reducing our use of any packaging that we consider to be extra to our needs and working towards recycled solutions for all



packaging that we still consider necessary (for transporting goods etc.). We also re-use packaging as much as possible.

- Paper: We use paper for labeling, wrapping and general office and retail activities such as printing receipts. We are reducing our printing by only when we consider it to be absolutely necessary, and printing on both sides of the paper. Our goal is for 100% of our paper to be sourced from certified sustainably managed forests with a minimum of 50% recycled content.

## Carbon Footprint

We are committed to reducing and compensating for our carbon emissions. We continue to look for new approaches to manage carbon emissions effectively.

Aside from the choices we make with materials and the cutting back of resource use, we also make adjustments to reduce or compensate for our carbon emissions in the following ways.

- Reducing Waste: We have reduced the amount of our landfill waste by recycling, using less packaging and other materials more efficiently. We do this in house and ask all new suppliers to do the same.
- Efficient Use Of Vehicles: We choose vehicles with fuel efficiency and CO2 emissions in mind and operate our vehicles in the most efficient ways possible: not when we can easily walk, with as many passengers as possible, coordinating journeys to be making many stops in one journey instead of many journeys.
- Logistics: We aim to continue to improve our logistics planning with shipment consolidations.
- Efficient & Compensated Travel: We continue to reduce our air travel, travelling only when necessary and combining business trips where possible.



## Hazardous Substances

We are working to reduce and then completely eliminate hazardous substances from every part of business and supply chain. Chemicals are usually used through the growing, processing, dyeing & printing of fabrics and clothing as well as in many parts of daily business operations. In the daily operations of conventional supply chains, chemicals used are often hazardous not only to the environment, but also to the craftspeople using them and in some cases they are dangerous to the end user of the garment.

We require our suppliers to disclose the use and disposal of chemicals of concern.

These are the initiatives we are taking to reduce and eliminate hazardous substances from all of our activities.

- Growing & Processing of Raw Materials: Most fabrics use chemicals in their growth and processing stages. The chemicals used have a big impact on the environment. The cultivation of cotton, for example, accounts for 3% of all cultivated land but uses 22.5% of the world's insecticides and more than 10% of the world's pesticides. These chemicals are known to be harmful for the environment and the people who interact with them. According to the World Health Organization, 20,000 deaths result from pesticide poisoning in third world countries each year and a further 1,000,000 people a year suffer from long-term pesticide poisoning. Clearly this is a very important issue that needs our attention and this is why we do our best to work from the environmentally preferred materials list above, the materials in which use less or no chemicals in their growth and processing.
- Fabric Finishes: we avoid anti wrinkle finishes containing formaldehyde, Waterproofing PFOs (known to be carcinogenic) and dry cleaning compounds. We avoid buying bleached fabric and are reducing the use of bleach in our preparations for dyeing.
- Dyeing: We are continually increasing our use of plant based & biodegradable dyes and always use azo free dyes - most azo dyes are known to be carcinogenic.
- Garment Finishes: We do not use sandblasting (usually used on denim), which is dangerous for the technician and the wearer.



- Printing: Printing can be one of the most toxic stages of the making process if done conventionally. We avoid using printing inks containing phthalates, alkylphenol, ethoxylates and other hazardous chemicals. Screen cleaning is usually the most hazardous step in the printing process, to remove this hazard we use mineral spirits instead of solvent-based cleaners.
- Retail & work bases: In all our stores, offices, workrooms and warehouses we take care to reduce or avoid using chemicals. For office printing we are increasing our use of vegetable based inks and when printing commercially, we prefer to use companies that specialize in the use of soy based inks
- Cleaning and maintenance of retail & work bases: we take care to use eco conscious cleaning products and body products. We maintain our store and work materials with natural oils and products.

## Recycling

- In all of our stores, offices, workrooms and warehouses we are first minimizing waste through careful and efficient use of all materials, and using less, or choosing materials with less packaging.
- We are sorting waste and recycling. In Bali this is managed via Eco Bali [or Our Partners] which is a paid service from which proceeds are used to finance an recycling education project in Balinese schools.
- We refill and/or recycle ink cartridges and recycle IT hardware responsibly.

## Home & Virtual Offices

We encourage all team members to use this policy as a guide for their home and virtual offices, to increase awareness of their own environmental impact and to increase the use of environmentally preferred products and practices. We provide a helpful list of preferred local suppliers and suggest integrating the following practices into your home.



- Purchasing environmentally preferred office materials including vegetable or soy based inks, recycled paper, eco friendly cleaning & body products etc.
- Limiting printing to when necessary and using both sides of the page.
- Being aware of energy usage: switching off lights, technology, chargers, heaters etc. when not in use. Using energy saving lightbulbs.
- Refilling and/or recycling ink cartridges and recycling/disposal of IT hardware, e-waste & other hazardous materials responsibly.
- Recycling of as much waste as possible.

## Keeping the Conversation Alive

We work hard to show leadership on all environmental issues, to be an example and to inspire and influence good practice. We actively participate in conversation with our supply chain and in our local and global communities.

- Our Team: We train our team in good environmental practice in the workplace and home and encourage involvement in environmental action.
- Our Suppliers: We build authentic relationships based on open communication and trust with all suppliers. We share our environmental policy with them, help them to set targets and encourage and support them in any way possible in the planning and implementation of their own strategies.
- Our Communities: We have several initiatives in play to help raise awareness and support environmental causes. We work collaboratively with social and environmental charities and projects through our Social Profit program, we keep the conversation alive on our website and social media and through interviews discussing these important issues, and we talk with and help our customers on a daily basis.
- Information sharing: In store and on our website we share environmentally friendly ways to wash and care for clothing and other simple tips people can use to lessen their own environmental impact. Our care labels specifically mention eco friendly soap and line drying as preferred care whenever reasonable.