

The Green Beans Report

The Crisis of Fast Fashion by KATIE KNIGHT

WHATS THE PROBLEM?

Fast fashion is a crisis all around the world that has an adverse effect on the population and the environment. These effects are brutal in many ways, not only is so much clothing is being put into landfill but it is also gets burned and the toxins that come out of the clothes then seep into the ground, along with the fumes that would be coming off of the polyester into the air. Also, did you know it takes 700 gallons of water to produce 1 t-shirt? The fashion industry produces 10% of global carbon emissions, which is more than air travel. This all makes for a catastrophic outcome in the next 20 years if the fast fashion industry keeps on growing.

Non-biodegradable (otherwise known as synthetic material) clothing is made up of the following products: polyester, spandex, nylon, and rayon. It will take between 20 to 200 years to fully biodegrade these textiles in landfill. "Millions of tons of CO₂ polluting our atmosphere and raising global temperatures. Millions of tons of micro plastics and fibers contaminating oceans and poisoning the food chain, including humans' ourselves" says 'CODOGIRL JOURNAL' ^[1].

Every year, the world population purchases around 80 billion pieces of new clothing globally. Fashion consumption increased by 60% between 2000 and 2014 to meet the demand of fast fashion's ever-changing demand on the population.

There are ways we can reduce the carbon foot print on every consumer of clothing in the world and slow down fast fashion. OP-shops such as Vinnie's, The Asthma Foundation, and lifeline are all great resource centres to send your discarded clothes that you don't want anymore. They are a cheap way to get the clothes you want and not have to spend a ton of money getting them slightly worn

The problem that op-shops like lifeline and Vinnies provide is that when the clothes don't sell in 1 week they transport the unsellable clothes to a bigger factory and get turned into cubes. These cubes are then sent to third world countries, landfill or burned.



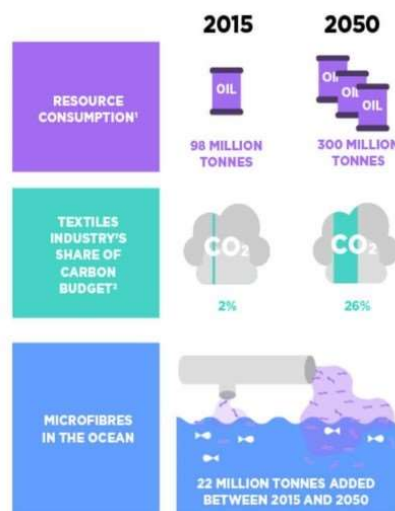
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-16/fashion-waste-more-research-needed-to-tackle-industry-problem/8807972>

Negative impacts of the textiles industry are set to drastically increase by 2050



1 Consumption of non-renewable resources of the textiles industry, including oil to produce synthetic fibres, fertilisers to grow cotton, and chemicals to produce, dye, and finish fibres and textiles
2 Carbon budget based on 2 degrees scenario
Source: Circular Fibres Initiative analysis - for details see Part I of the full report

tiny.cc/fibres



This image above represents the 6000kg of clothes that is dumped into Australian Landfill sites every 10 minutes

<https://youtu.be/QgzYn7qgQmk>

Image left shows global pollution effects of Fast Fashion.

<https://www.codogirl.com/blogs/news/the-impact-of-fast-fashion#>

What can THEY do?

This relates to the teenage community because this generation, in time will need to take a stand on what is happening at the moment. Making a choice to spend their new income from jobs on expensive longer lasting clothes or cheap clothes, which will in time become old and/or out of fashion and won't be the craze anymore. It is what we do with them after this that is also a choice, will we want to throw it in the trash. We are getting disposable income in new jobs and we need think about how to spend responsibly and as a collective we the community can make a change to the vicious cycle of fast fashion.

Some stores in the fashion industry have started to recognize their impact on the environment. Looking at their materials, and sourcing them from sustainable organic cotton, not only reduces the amount of plastic content, but also the chemicals and water used in the production process. Look for the BCI Label on some Kmart clothes (Better Cotton Initiative)

Some stores such as H&M have a bring back program where you can take a bag of old clothes back to the store for a discount. They also look for ways to reduce their impact in ways of materials, logistics and Fairtrade manufacture. <https://www.msn.com/en-xl/news/other/h-26m-recycling-scheme-seeks-future-for-sustainable-fashion/ar-BB1a4HMY>

It's still a very long way to go. Reducing the carbon footprint on Earth in the community is also a big topic to bring up as well, Business insider has reported that "The fashion industry produces 10% of all humanity's carbon emissions, is the second-largest consumer of the world's water supply, and pollutes the oceans with micro plastics". One community at a time we can change what the future looks like.

So what can WE do?

The main principles we focus on at the school are the closed loop **REDUCE**, **REUSE**, and **RECYCLE** approach. How do these ideas relate to this problem?

As a community we can **REDUCE** the amount of clothing we buy and chuck out. We can **REUSE** by giving a new purpose to the old T-shirts or jeans by turning them into bags or you can turn your shirts into a quilt. **RECYCLE** could mean to give away your old clothes to friends or to hand your old clothes down to a sibling another or donate to an op shop. Doing the **3 R's** will help heaps in the future with fast fashion and the clothing consumption in the world. Buying second hand is the best way we as individuals can make a start.

As a school initiative in the future we could look at a "drop a bag get a bag" clothes swap which would promote eco-friendliness by way of slowing fast fashion, the opportunity to have a new wardrobe in an inexpensive way, by letting go of old clothes that they don't want and getting new ones while saving all of those clothes from landfill. We can also donate old fabric or unusable clothes to local communities such as sewing groups who can upcycle into bags etc.



<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/trendy-cheap-and-dirty-fashion-is-a-top-global-polluter/> (image, left)



Flagstone Community Centre Sewing group have started producing bags out of recycled fabric for the community.

<https://www.flagstonecommunitycentre.com/groups>

<https://boomerangbags.org/>

Sources

[1] <https://www.codogirl.com/blogs/news/the-impact-of-fast-fashion>