

# Climate, women and children

Sustinnoworx | Ella Martin



# Sustinnoworx

Sustinnoworx is a social enterprise which raises funds to support Shakti and SDETAT organisations which serve migrant women and children survivors. It raises money through the sale of organic and refill food products, preloved clothing and upcycled textile items. Upcycled items are made from donated textile waste whilst training learners in valuable sewing and sustainability skills.

In my role funded by Foundation North, I extend this education out to the community, delivering workshops and seminars surrounding textile waste, fast fashion, human rights and sustainability.

My background is in mainstream fashion. I worked for 3 years in a production team for a local label and completed my bachelors degree of Fashion and Sustainability at Auckland University of Technology.

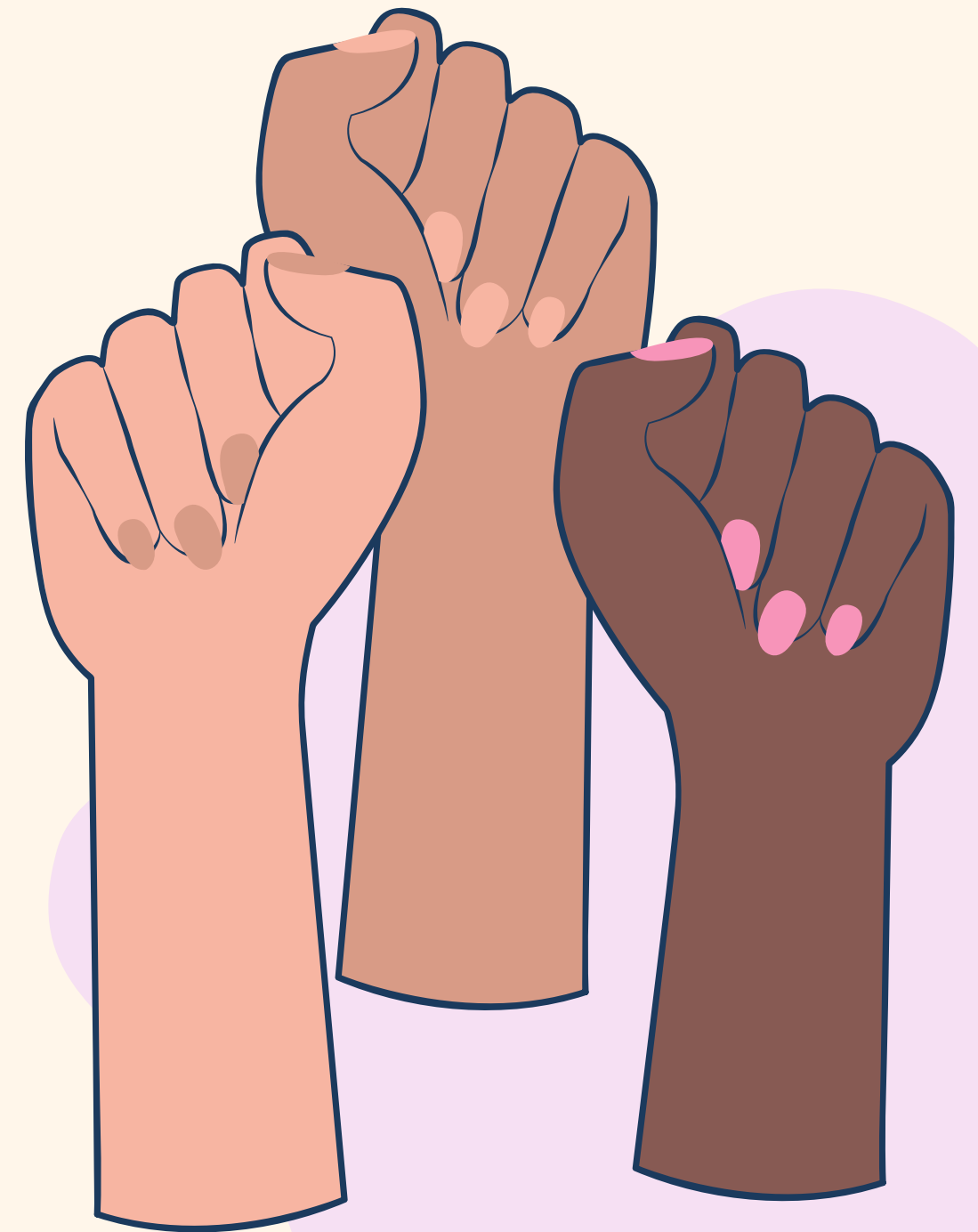
[sustinnoworx.co.nz](http://sustinnoworx.co.nz)



# The fashion industry and women

The fashion industry is well known to harm garment workers along its manufacturing process, but it is not emphasised how much this impacts women in particular. Women make up 80% of garment workers. In an industry where large fashion corporations pressure factories to lower garment prices to unrealistic degrees, women are a labour force that are more vulnerable to exploitation in patriarchal cultures.

Women are also more likely to enter garment work as it can be completed from home, to allow them to care for children or older family members. However, this exposes them to exploitation and financial abuse even more, as this work is often illegal- so women cannot seek support from authorities.



# The fashion industry and women

When work is not completed by a short deadline, when a technical mistake is made, or if workers try to take a break to care for themselves or a dependant

Physical abuse

Financial abuse

Sexual abuse

Emotional abuse

When garment factories must meet unrealistically low piece prices due to pressure from fashion brands, this cost cutting impacts women garment workers by low wages, long working days and poor working conditions.

Eye strain and body pain

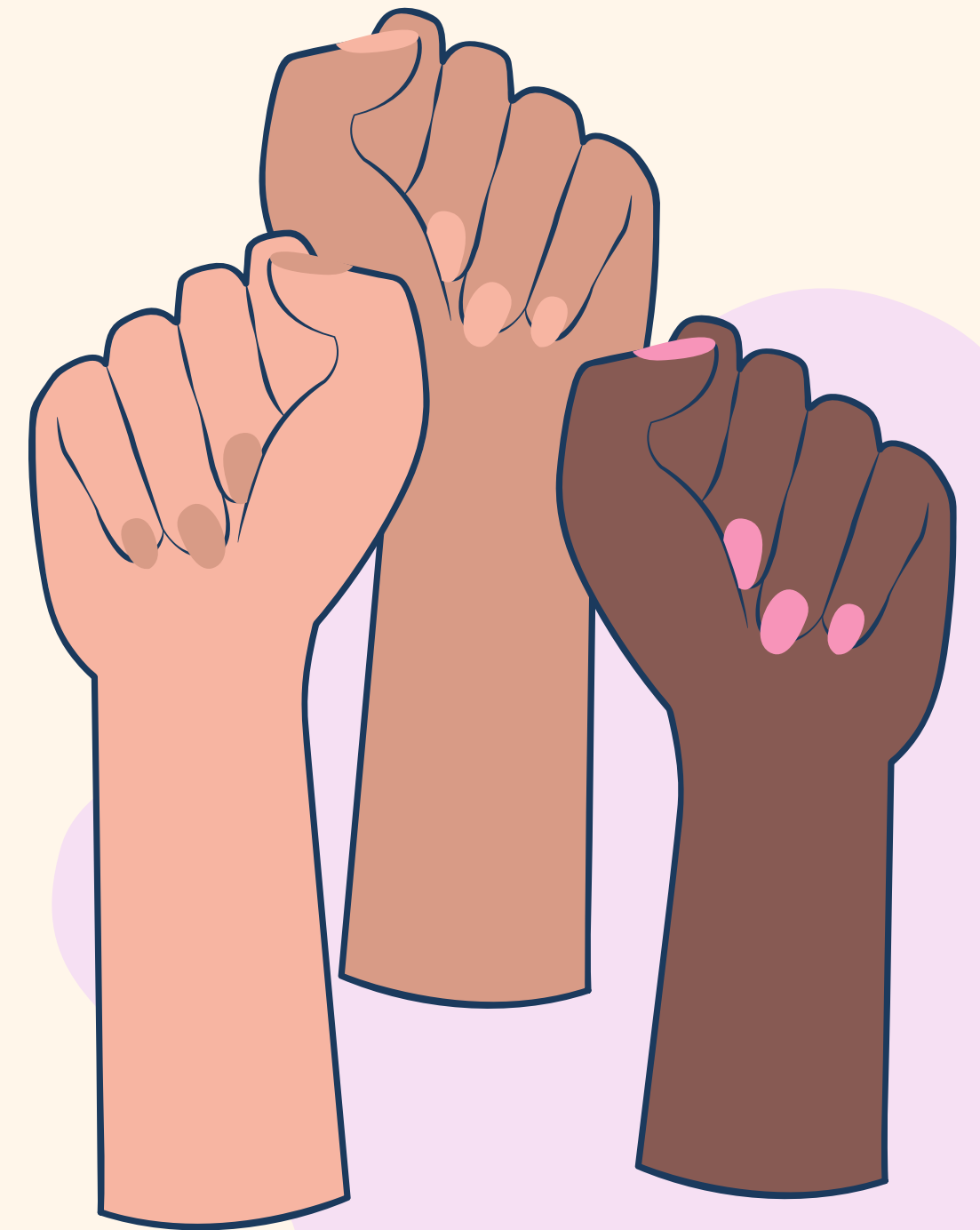
Fire risk

Exhaustion

Respiratory illness

Chemical poisoning

Unstable buildings



# The fashion industry and children



## Parents

Children are impacted by the conditions of their parents who are garment workers. Parents will often work 10-14 hour days, or may need to travel to a neighbouring city and stay for full weeks, with children being looked after by friends or relatives. If parents cannot find support, they may bring their children to the factory, where they are at risk of harm.



## Child labour

An estimated 170 million children are engaged in child labour globally. Many work in textile or garment production. In cotton picking, employers prefer to hire children for their small fingers. Children are seen as more obedient and unable to seek advice or support.



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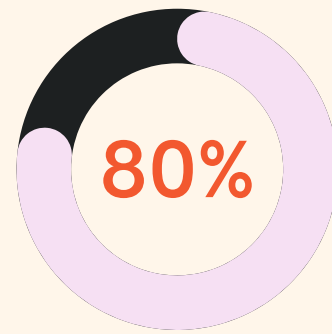


# Fashion and pollution

Fashion and its supply chain is the third largest polluting industry, after food and construction.

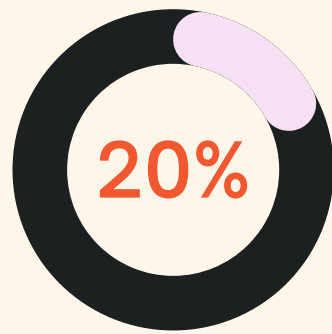


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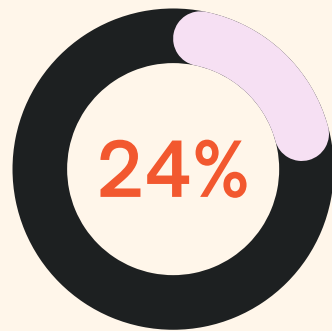
## Unused clothes

100 billion garments are produced annually. Only 80% of these are purchased by a consumer, meaning 20% of all garments made are burned or landfilled without being used.



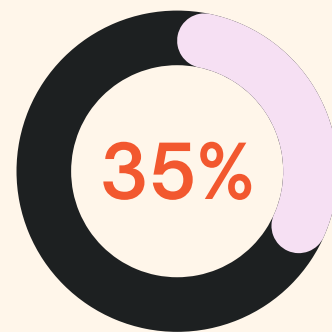
## Water

Fashion manufacturing produces 20% of wastewater



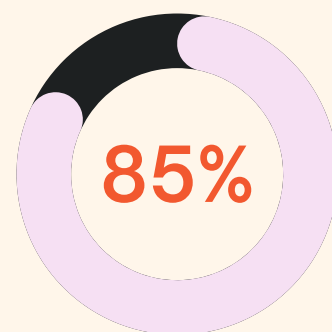
## Air and land

Cotton farming is responsible for 24% of insecticides and 11% of pesticides used



## Microplastics

35% of all microplastics come from fashion and textiles. 65% of textiles made are synthetics.



## Landfill

Annually, 85% of textiles generated are landfilled- including cutting floor waste, unworn clothes and worn clothes. In New Zealand, we dump 220,000 tonnes of textiles annually

# Climate change

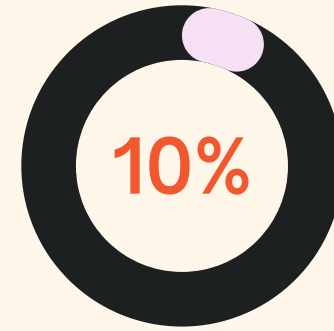
Over the past few months, New Zealand has felt the effects of climate change deeply. Climate change was formerly known as global warming, but updated to reflect the diverse impacts on our weather- including heavy rain like we saw in New Zealand, and deep freezes like Texas faced in 2021. Climate change will impact all countries and demographics at some stage, including wealthy countries like New Zealand and America, but it has been impacting developing and ethnic countries more severely for decades- such as the very severe floods in Pakistan in 2022.





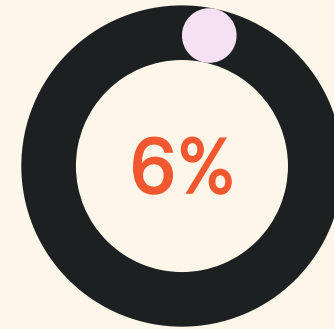
# Fashion and climate

The fashion industry creates greenhouse gases at every stage of the supply chain- from textile production, to manufacturing, to shipping and end of life.



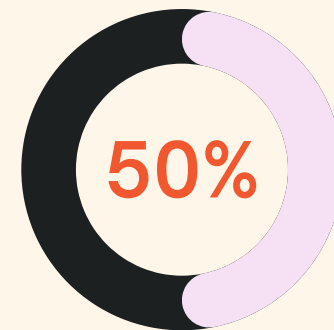
## Greenhouse gases

Emissions created in the production, shipping and decomposition of clothes, means the fashion industry emits 10% of the world's greenhouse gases.



## Textiles in landfill

Textiles make up approximately 6% of landfill, but emits over 3x its weight in greenhouse gases.



## Current trends

Greenhouse gas emissions from the fashion industry are projected to grow by 50% if current trends continue



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# Climate and women

"It is estimated that 80 per cent of people displaced by climate change are women, according to UN Environment. When women are displaced, they are at greater risk of violence, including sexual violence, said Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. "While they sleep, wash, bathe or dress in emergency shelters, tents or camps, the risk of sexual violence is a tragic reality of their lives as migrants or refugees," Bachelet said. "Compounding this is the increased danger of human trafficking, and child, early and forced marriage which women and girls on the move endure."

United Nations Human Rights -  
Office of the High Commissioner

"...Women are more likely to live in poverty than men, have less access to basic human rights like the ability to freely move and acquire land, and face systematic violence that escalates during periods of instability.

Women often have to shoulder a larger burden, in countless settings, and it deepens existing gender inequalities.

"In rural communities across the globe, women and girls overwhelmingly undertake the labor of gathering food, water, and household energy resources," she said. "As droughts worsen and forests burn, they have to travel further distances and spend more time acquiring these resources. As a result, they have less time to pursue other sources of income, which prevents them from becoming economically independent."

Global Citizen

  
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Nearly 710 million children are currently living in countries at the highest risk of suffering the impact of the climate crisis. However, every child will inherit a planet with more frequent extreme weather events than ever before.

Extreme events, including wildfires, floods and hurricanes, have become a frightening new normal. Hotter temperatures, air pollution and violent storms are leading to immediate, life-threatening dangers for children, including difficulty breathing, malnutrition and higher risk of infectious diseases.

- **Extreme temperatures leave many families living in poverty with less food, less clean water, lower incomes and worsening health.**
- **Children's immune systems are still developing, leaving their rapidly growing bodies more sensitive to disease and pollution.**
- **Extreme events can destroy homes, schools, child care centers and infrastructure critical to children's well-being.**

Save the Children



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# Climate and children

- **90% of diseases resulting from the climate crisis are likely to affect children under the age of five.**
- **By 2050, a further 24 million children are projected to be undernourished as a result of the climate crisis.**
- **By 2040, it is estimated that one in four children will be living in areas with extreme water shortages.**
- **Almost 160 million children are exposed to increasingly severe and prolonged droughts.**
- **The education of around 38 million children is disrupted each year by the climate crisis.**
- **The climate crisis is forcing families to migrate. By 2050, there could be 143 million more migrants due to the climate crisis.**

# Taking Responsibility

## *Personal habits and mindset*

There are many ways that we can form our consumption habits to reduce our climate impact. The key to maintaining these habits changes are to ask yourself:

- What is realistic within my budget?
- What is available within my town?
- What unique skills do I have or can access in my family?



## Alter your consumption habits

- Buy less things, and use what you have fully
- When you must buy, consider second-hand- many people give good items away for free on Facebook also
- If you cannot get something secondhand, invest in ethical and high quality items, particularly made in New Zealand (reduced climate impact)
- Borrow things from your family or community that you will use infrequently
- Repair things when they break- build your own skills, or support a local repair shop

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## Travel

- When commuting to work, consider public transport, walking or cycling
- Consider if work travel can be replaced with online meetings
- Consider if you can replace your international holiday with a local road trip, supporting NZ businesses

## Food

- Grow your own food or swap resources with your neighbours
- Support local markets and family grocers
- Eat less meat
- Ensure to use all of the food you buy, and research creative uses for food waste
- Replace consumables like single-use packaging with reusables

# Taking Responsibility

## *Community engagement and workplace*

However, we are not solitary beings. In fact, it is the western individualism that has driven the impacts of climate change. System changes and community activism are key to reducing the impacts of climate change.

Joining local activism and community service groups can amplify your voice and actions, and help to connect your unique skills and passions with the people and environments that need them. The workplace is also an effective place to consider group action, in a way that aligns with your organisations missions.



## Workplace

- Consider carpooling with colleagues to work
- Introduce zero-waste and recycling systems into the office- have a selection of reusable containers for the team to get food in, make a recycling and soft plastics bin
- Reduce paper and replace with digital systems
- Buy office refreshments in bulk and consider refill options
- Think about food in the workplace. Can you introduce a composting scheme, can someone take the food waste home?
- Utilise energy effectively- turn off lights and equipment when not in use
- Recycle old tech rather than dumping
- Consider workplace initiatives- a tree planting day, skill-sharing, volunteering, or raising funds/ resources for environmental or social causes

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## Community Engagement

- Vote in local and national elections and write submissions on local issues
- Engage with MP's and local board members
- Participate in community hui
- Volunteer with conservation groups
- Participate in climate strikes
- Speak with your friends and family about climate change
- Attend community classes about waste reduction, like composting courses

Thank you for  
listening

Happy Womens Day

