

Home-grown green fashion

Katie Roberts shares her favourite Ethical Clothing Australia-certified brands, and the low-down on the ethics of Australian fashion manufacturing.

The Social Outfit

This ethical trading social enterprise provides employment and training in the fashion industry to people from refugee and new migrant communities at their store and sewing school in Newtown, NSW. Not in the area? Buy their gorgeous colourful designs, which include collaborations with Australian creative darlings Romance Was Born and Bianca Spender, at www.thesocialoutfit.org.



Organic Crew

Designer Mel Lechte of Organic Crew delivers a brand that prioritises sustainable and ethical practices. Their collections, made from organic Indian cotton that is milled, eco-dyed and manufactured in Melbourne, transcend the seasons, and can be worn on their own or layered. www.organiccrew.com.au



* Two minutes with ...

Angela Bell from Ethical Clothing Australia, www.ethicalclothingaustralia.org

When you buy an Ethical Clothing Australia (ECA) accredited label, which you can easily identify from the ECA logo on the tag or online, you're investing a brand that values its workers. Brands that commit to our accreditation scheme are subject to audits to ensure that people making your clothing receive appropriate entitlements and safe work conditions. Just because something is made in Australia doesn't mean it's made ethically. Some workers, mainly women, work for small businesses or alone at home, and they're vulnerable to exploitation – unrealistic deadlines, long hours, irregular work flows. Buying ECA brands is a vote for a more transparent supply chain.



Hit the mall

Prefer to shop the old-fashioned bricks-and-mortar way? You'll find Ethical Clothing Australia-certified labels in a store near you as well as online. For office-to-drinks-party dresses, try CUE at Myer stores, or at www.cue.cc. And if you've left your wedding outfit planning to the last minute, Myer also offers Aussie-made ensembles (98% of their collection) at Anthea Crawford (www.antheacrawford.com.au) and Veronika Maine (www.veronikamaine.com.au). More farm than formal? Grab a classic Akubra hat at www.akubra.com.au.

Vege Threads

If there's one brand known for comfy basics that won't harm you or the planet, it has to be Aussie-made Vege Threads. This Victorian-based label is committed to low impact menswear and womenswear, and uses hemp, merino, 100% GOTS-certified organic cotton, and natural plant dyes. www.vegethreads.com

Katie Roberts is an environmental scientist focused on sustainability education in the fashion industry. www.sustainabilityinstyle.com

